

TLS Subscriptions

The *TLS* is read in over eighty countries throughout the world. A large proportion of our readers find that the surest and most convenient way to get the *TLS* each week is to take out a subscription. Our subscription service provides readers quickly and regularly with their weekly copy of the paper, which offers an incomparable and up to date guide to books published all over the world.

Simply complete the coupon below and send it together with your cheque to the address shown.

The following postal zones are listed for your convenience. If your country is not included, please contact your local postal authority to ascertain your correct zone as specified by the British Post Office.

United Kingdom Only by surface mail.
6 months (26 issues) £15.00. 12 months (52 issues) £30.00
British Postal Zone 'A' including Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
6 months (26 issues) £26.26. 12 months (52 issues) £52.52
British Postal Zone 'B' including Argentina, Bermuda, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
6 months (26 issues) £29.12. 12 months (52 issues) £58.24
British Postal Zone 'C' including Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan.
6 months (26 issues) £31.72. 12 months (52 issues) £63.44
Europe including Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta.
6 months (26 issues) £23.66. 12 months (52 issues) £47.32
USA and Canada by air.
6 months (26 issues) US\$35.00. 12 months (52 issues) US\$70.00

Please send me *The Times Literary Supplement*

☐ 6 months ☐ 12 months

NAME PLEASE PRINT

ADDRESS

I enclose my cheque for payable to Times Newspapers Ltd

Signature Date

Return this coupon to Times Newspapers Ltd, Subscription Subscriptions Manager, Oakfield House, 35 Parkway Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 3SD.

The Times Literary Supplement

January 6 1984 Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M4BX

Contents

GEOFFREY HOLMES	BASIL DUKES HENNING (Editor): <i>The House of Commons 1660-1690</i>
BASIL OREENSLADE	R. W. Harris: <i>Clarendon and the English Revolution</i>
JOHN DINWIDDY	Mary Thale (Editor): <i>Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society 1792-1799</i>
JULIAN BARNES	Philip Larkin: <i>Required Writing - Miscellaneous pieces 1955-1982</i>
PETER READING	I have invented (poem)
MARC FUMAROLI	M. A. Sereech: <i>Mourning and Melancholy - The wisdom of the essays</i>
JOHN HOPE MASON	Elizabeth De Fontenay: <i>Diderot - Reason and resonance</i>
ALASTAIR FORBES	Andrew Barrow: <i>International Gossip - A history of high society 1970-1980</i>
IAN MONCREIFFE	Compton Miller: <i>Who's Really Who</i>
OF THAT ILK	Tina Brown: <i>Life as a Party</i>
ALAN HOLLINOHURST	Loelia Lindsay: <i>Cocktails and Laughter</i>
GEORGE SZIRTES	Robert Lacey: <i>Aristocrats</i>
R. T. SHANNON	Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner: <i>London 2 - South</i>
NESTA ROBERTS	Stephen Crook: <i>London's Bridges</i>
DAVID BINDMAN	Edward Jones and Christopher Woodward: <i>A Guide to the Architecture of London</i>
PATROOERS	Hugh Casson: <i>Hugh Casson's London</i>
WILLIAM PLOWDEN	Meetings (poem)
DICK LEONARD	Judith M. Hughes: <i>Emotion and High Politics - Personal relations in the nineteenth century Britain and Germany</i>
PHILIP THODY	Ruth Michaelis-Jena: <i>Heritage of the Kaiser's Children - An autobiography</i>
CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS	Ronald Paulson: <i>Book and Painting - Shakespeare, Milton and the Bible</i>
STANLEY WELLS	Paul J. Korshin: <i>Typologies in England 1650-1820</i>
ROOER NICHOLS	Christopher C. Hood: <i>The Tools of Government</i>
MICHAEL SHELTON	John Fitzmaurice: <i>The Politics of Belgium - Crisis and compromise in plural society</i>
CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE	Olivier Todd: <i>Une légende de bois</i>
ROY HARRIS	American notes
A. HALLAM	Letters on Early Industrial England, 'The Times', The Oaker Case, etc
C. VITA-PINZI	Author, Author
JAMES HUNTER	Commentary
SAVKAR ALTINEL	Shakespeare: <i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona and The Comedy of Errors</i> (BBC TV)
JOHN MELMOTH	Olivier Messiaen: <i>Si François d'Assise</i> (Opéra, Paris)
PATRICIA CRAIG	Orwell and his publishers: new letters
DAVID COWARD	The Landlord of Himself (poem)
AVRIL BRUTEN	The Misunderstanding of Newmarket (Article)
MAURICE LARKIN	Ron Redfern: <i>The Making of a Continent</i>
RICHARD BONNEY	John McPherson: <i>In Suspect Terrain</i>
GORDON WRIGHT	Alastair Couper (Editor): <i>The Times Atlas of the Ocean</i>
MICHAEL CROWDER	Donald J. Witherington (Editor): <i>Shetland and the Outside World 1459-1969</i>
PHYLLIS WILLMOTT	Charles Johnson: <i>Oxherding Tale</i>
CHARLOTTE GERE	Tom Wakefield: <i>Mates</i>
TERRY LOCKETT	John Bowen: <i>Squeak - A biography of NPA 1978-203</i>
STELLA MARY NEWTON	Michael Dean: <i>Where are you dying tonight?</i>
Cover picture	Russell A. Peck: <i>Chaucer's Lyrics and Anecdotes and An annotated bibliography 1900-1980</i>

The growing presence of Parliament

Geoffrey Holmes

BASIL DUKES HENNING (Editor)
The House of Commons 1660-1690
Three volumes: 764, 786 and 793pp. Secker and Warburg. £120 the set.
0436 192748

The latest set of volumes of the official *History of Parliament*, the fifth to appear, covers a period with a political configuration that is distinctive and in some respects unique. It is lent a certain symmetry by the fact that in parliamentary terms it begins and ends with two "Conventions", neither of which was summoned by royal writ. Yet in between, much of the ground is uneven by contrast with the regularities of the constitutional landscape after 1688-9. Parliament did indeed sit to do business in all but three years between 1660 and 1681. But even then its presence was fitful. By post-Revolution standards several of the sessions both of the Cavalier Parliament (1661-79) and the three "Exclusion" Parliaments were cripplingly short: four lasted either just under or just over two months, one for less than seven weeks, one for mere three weeks, and the briefest of all—the Oxford Parliament of 1681—for exactly seven days.

In truth, neither Charles II nor his brother James had any great affection for parliamentary monarchy. Both kings envied the freedom from restraint enjoyed by their absolutist cousin, Louis XIV; and in March 1681, as soon as his financial position allowed it, the Restoration monarchy embarked on the last long period of personal rule in England's history: seven years and eight months during which a Parliament sat at Westminster for only fifty-five days. In 1685, even during the Exclusion Crisis, Charles had stretched his powers of prerogative to the absolute limit, provoking master protest petitions. Indeed, a point rarely appreciated (Basil Duke Henning's editorial introduction, too, falls to pick it up) is that in close on two years, from May 28, 1679, to January 22, 1689, there were only twenty weeks in which parliamentary business was transacted. In the course of that decade the Crown's prerogative was wielded against the avowed or suspected opponents of royal policies in many ways, some of which could never have been contemplated by Charles I. Among much else, Acts of Parliament were emasculated by resort to the Crown's suspending and dispensing powers, and there was a direct flouting of two major statutes, under one of which a Parliament ought to have been called in March 1684, but never was. But of all the authoritarian steps of 1679-88 the most alarming, especially after the build-up of an intimidating standing army, was the planned campaign of James II and his ministers to manufacture a puppet Parliament to repeal the anti-Catholic penal laws. Henning's sober verdict on this policy is worth quoting: it is that, without a revolution in 1688, "it is at least a possibility that it would have succeeded, and with it the establishment of absolutism in England."

The decades spanned by the newest volumes of the *History of Parliament* were thus of decisive importance in the history of the English constitution. It is any wonder that the last Parliament of this period, in the wake of the Glorious Revolution, produced a Bill of Rights which not only legalized many recent arbitrary practices but enjoined that "parliaments ought to be held frequently"? As it happened, by the time it passed that Act the Convention Parliament of 1689 had already itself begun to set the pattern of the future, in which no king or minister would ever again contemplate governing the country without regularly involving the House of Commons in the process. It did so, moreover, as the heir to another critical legacy of its thirty years before 1690 which in turn it would pass on to future generations: the arrival of the first true political parties which Europe had never known, parties which had already acquired a national as well as a purely Westminster presence. On these grounds alone there is a very strong case for as much information as is contained in these volumes about the House of Commons in 1660-90 and about the 2,040 men who were seated in it during those years.

The now familiar series pattern: first, a substantial introduction, in which the editor, bristling with statistics, interprets and categorizes the huge mass of information assembled later; second, a 400-page survey of the parliamentary elections and by-elections of the period, constituency by constituency; and finally biographical studies of all the MPs of 1660-90, with the main emphasis naturally on the part they played in parliamentary affairs.

These portraits vary in length and detail as their subjects' importance dictates. At one extreme we have the twenty-seven lines allotted to John Tufon, whose only distinction is that his identity alone eluded Henning and his co-researchers to the end. At the other pole stand the many multi-column essays lavished on the leading Commons men of the day, such as the Coventry brothers, Cavendish, Clifford, the irrepressible John Birch, whom Burnet singled

Journals plainly tell us that a majority of the House's 513 members were more often absent than present. From 1660 right through to 1685 a turn-out of 300 in an important division was astronomical. In both attempts to impeach Lord Treasurer Danby fewer than 300 voted. So far as we can tell from voting figures, the highest recorded attendance at an Exclusion Bill debate was 355.

It is instructive to compare these figures (even allowing for the influx of Scots in 1707) with the 467, including tellers, who took part in the vote of April 1714 on the safety of the Protestant Succession or with the 460 who were present when a vital question was called for on the Mutiny Bill in 1718. Neither of these occasions involved an utterly straight division along party lines. Yet there can be no possible doubt that the continuing and developing pressures of party allegiance, and the disciplines these

On the other hand, between half and three fifths of every House of Commons of this period consisted of country gentlemen, pure and simple, men whose entire fortune rested on land; and by setting down what is known about their electoral background and parliamentary record Henning and his colleagues leave little room for doubt that while not all these landed squires lacked political ambitions or commitment, the majority, to begin with, were primarily motivated by desire for the status which a seat in Parliament conferred. From their ranks came most of the near-behavioral absentees and the "sleeping partners" in the post-Restoration Commons—those who played little or no part in debates, were rarely elected to committees and often drifted away to more congenial social engagements before the tellers started counting heads. The enquiries of Horwitz and Moore into "who ran the House" early in William III's reign identified 159 "workers" in the sessions of 1691-3, heavily outnumbered by 361 "non-workers". The imbalance in Charles II's reign was apparently even greater.

One of the great strengths of a biographical dictionary of Parliament is that it introduces us individually to those who made up the silent or largely inert mass as well as to the vocal, stirring minority. For they could not be ignored; nor were they by the great political managers of the day, such as Danby and Shaftesbury, who regularly cultivated, canvassed or black-listed them. Neither were they as anonymous as the mere statistical record might suggest. They came, in fact, in all shapes and sizes; some bovine, many diffident, yet conscientious "constituency men"; some disreputable wastrels; some amiable socialites; and a few hard-working business or professional men with only a limited amount of time to spare for parliamentary duties. A palm of some sort should go to Gilbert Raleigh, of Rectory House, Downton, who represented that small borough for nearly fourteen years "without being named to a single committee or appearing on any party list". What the electors of Downton thought of him is not known; and he died before he was called on to decide whether to submit himself for re-election. But we do know what the city of Chester thought of John Ratcliffe, who died in 1673, shortly before Raleigh; for although he made only three recorded speeches in the Convention and Cavalier Parliament and was in no sense a prominent parliamentarian, the corporation made a grant to his family in recognition of the fact that "in the service of the city [he] had spent a great part of his time and estate".

It is certainly clear that many whose careers at Westminster seemed pallid achieved colour in other ways: perhaps as artists, writers, poets or scientists, of whom there were unusually large numbers in the Parliaments of 1660-90; perhaps as rogues (like Thomas Wenklyn, who devoted most of his seventeen years as a Whig member to dodging his creditors and was at length expelled for involvement in a bogus protection racket); or as assiduous wooers (like Sir Francis Compton, whose fourth helms wife bore him a child when he was over seventy, who also found time to pursue an active military career and, though born in 1629, lived to see in the Hanoverian Succession). Other shadowy parliamentarians at least went out with a bang: Sir Francis Armstrong perishing on the Tyburn gallows, James Hosle putting a bullet through his head "in his closet", and Sir John Chichester murdering his young mistress before dying of smallpox a few hours later.

Yet the point must be re-emphasized: however technically "inactive" most of these men were—and however little they and hundreds of other bucolics (or dilettantes, rascals, duellists, or whatever) will be remembered for their politics—most of them were caught up, to some degree, by the burning issues of the day. Ratcliffe, for instance, was a staunch Presbyterian and tolerationist, Hosle a good Whig, and Armstrong a financial one. Henning shows how the vanguard of the Whig and Tory forces of 1679-90 can be discerned, for instance, in the switching of sides by many members during the lifetime of the Cavalier Parliament (eighty-two of the original 297 Court supporters elected in 1661 went over to the Opposition) or in the striking number of



One of a set of twelve engravings entitled *Officers and soldiers of the bodyguard of Emperor Rudolph II* by Jacob de Gheyn II which was sold at Sotheby's last month.

out as "the roughest and boldest speaker in the House", and William Sacheverell, "the first Whig", whose death in 1691 cut short a stormy, exciting career. The most fascinating of these larger cameos is possibly that of Sir George Downing, a man fitted more for the corridors than the debating chamber of the House, remembered today mainly because of his association with the 1660s and 1670s because of his unequalled understanding of the economy and his gluttonous appetite for "business".

But these are the etymological portraits in the gallery. The recurring message of the whole collection is that most of its subjects were not bred-in-the-bone political animals; they were even less so than their eighteenth-century successors. Once at Westminster, of course, many could not help being drawn into the fray. In fact from 1673 onwards, as politics became increasingly intense and divisive, it became almost impossible to steer completely clear. What is more, new members were by then regularly arriving in St Stephen's Chapel bearing some sort of political label, first Court or Country, later Whig or Tory. So it is all the more startling to discover how widespread absenteeism still was. Even in the session of 1678-9, plunged into hysteria by the Popish Plot, and in the frenetic atmosphere of the three Exclusion Parliaments, the Commons

came to exist, gradually wrought a powerful change in the assumptions and habits of MPs between 1670 and 1720. "Too apt to engage young men as soon as they come upon the [Commons] stage," complained the Cornishman William Borlase in 1747, "Party makes them forget their duty, and for it makes away the use of our legs as well as of our choice, and when we are listed . . . we move, speak, nay learn to think as we are prompted and directed by our leaders."

Even at the height of "the rage of party", however, politics only provides a part of the answer to Namier's famous question, "why did men go into Parliament?" And for the first half, at least, of the period 1660-90, the new *History* suggests that religious loyalties notwithstanding, that part was relatively minor. Of course the Parliaments of 1660-90 had their committed activists. But they were heavily outnumbered by two groups whose principal motivation in seeking election was essentially personal. On the one hand, there were the careerists: those to whom a seat in the House appeared professionally and financially advantageous. Government officials, practising barristers and legal functionaries, army and navy officers—most of these, it is safe to deduce, came into the Commons not uninfluenced either by expectations or by obligations directly connected with their professions.

A self-presenter re-presented

Basil Greenslade

R. W. HARRIS
Clarendon and the English Revolution
456pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press.
£30.
0701 26558

by-elections of 1673-8 which can be seen to have been fought out on Court/Country lines. This is not to imply that the publication of these volumes will necessitate drastic revision of the period's political map. But many details which have hitherto been fuzzy can now be confidently and sharply etched in, and several more important features, long accepted as guides to the terrain, will have to be rubbed out and re-drawn. Thus the proportion of Dissenters who sat in the Exclusion Parliaments proves to be astonishingly high - 25 per cent of the entire membership; the social structure of the two parties from 1679 to 1690 displays uncanny similarities; the resilience of the Whig party, as revealed both in the spirit with which they played a losing hand in the 1685 elections and in their clear-cut victory in the 1689 elections to the Convention (documented here beyond doubt), obviously calls for re-assessment.

Unfortunately, although this period witnessed important shifts in the social structure, and a "commercial revolution" as well as a political and constitutional one, Henning's work is essentially for students of politics and will arouse little elation among social historians. "It was decided in August 1664", J. P. Ferris tells us, "to computerize the data in each biography." Readers may well wonder now how wise that decision was. Too often, in the interpretation of an admittedly gigantic corpus of material, the computer appears to have dictated the terms of the operation, and common sense is sometimes pushed to the rear in the process. Tables jostle each other throughout the introduction like bargain-hunters at a New Year sale. Unless my bemused eyes deceived me I counted ninety-two of them on the first eighty-four pages. Some are invaluable and many are more than useful; but others vary in subject matter from the esoteric to the frivolous. All signify an obsession with numbers, rather than names, and among these numbers is the figure 604, percentage who takes up the name. Nearly every table bows before him, to the constant frustration of the reader. There must be more assimilable ways of conveying information than telling us, for instance, in one of the tables on "Politics and Religion", that out of 859 members of the Cavalier Parliament with known religious affiliations 16 per cent moved from Court to opposition; and that these included 16 per cent of the 520 Anglicans and 18 per cent of the eighty-seven "Presbyterian conformers".

Much more galling, not least for the non-political historian, is the total absence of straightforward lists of members, arranged by occupational, religious or political category, except for a short catalogue of Roman Catholics in an appendix. In the invaluable introduction to Romney Sedgwick's volumes on the Commons, 1715-54, such lists abound: lists of all the Dissenters whose biographies appear later; and likewise of all the professional civil servants, diplomats, pensioners, army officers and naval officers who sat in the early Hanoverian Commons. Every one of the 209 lawyers and 198 merchants was listed by name, as were all industrialists and the representatives of the East India and West India interest. Every category could thus be followed through exhaustively and often with enormous profit. But the scholar interested in any similar category in the new volumes - say in the legal profession from 1660 to 1690 - gets only minimal help from Henning's introduction. He is told that 14 per cent of the 2,040 members were lawyers. But to identify them, or any other group, he must plough through every single biography in the work; each operation a marathon scan through 1,814 double-columned pages.

On such a vast monument to patient scholarship and to twenty years of fruitful Anglo-American co-operation these are irritating postscript rather than major flaws. Professor Henning and his team deserve our gratitude as well as congratulations for packing that monument with treasures. Those that are immediately accessible have already shared our view of late Stuart politics will never be quite the same again. Those that are more difficult of access, or unaccountably locked away in strong rooms, will take a very long time to extract. But given dedication, a large table, strong fingers and, at least, a calculator, it will be time well spent.

On subversion bent

John Dinwiddy

MARY THALE (Editor)
Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society 1792-1799
472pp. Cambridge University Press. £45.
0521 243637

The London Corresponding Society, founded by the shoemaker Thomas Hardy at the beginning of 1792, was not the first working-men's organization formed to press for a radical reform of parliament; the Sheffield Constitutional Society was launched a few weeks earlier. But the LCS was the most durable and influential body of its kind in the 1790s, and it is surprising that, while many scholars have written quite extensively about it in works dealing with late eighteenth-century radicalism, Mary Thale's book is the first publication of any substance that has been exclusively devoted to it. Thanks mainly to confusions carried out by the government in 1794 and 1798, and also to the collection made by Francis Place, the surviving papers of the society are voluminous. They consist partly of journals and minute-books, partly of printed matter (addresses, pamphlets, handbills, circulars, and two short-lived periodicals), and partly of the correspondence which the LCS conducted with other radical societies, mainly outside London. Mary Thale evidently decided that a comprehensive edition of the society's papers was impracticable, and her selection, which makes a large book, is estimated to comprise about a third of the total corpus of material. She has chosen to concentrate on the internal proceedings of the society. She prints, with a few specified exceptions, all the surviving records of its committees and divisions, and, with some omissions where there is duplication, all the extant reports on the LCS that were sent to the authorities by spies. Spies' reports, indeed - though strictly speaking they can hardly be described as papers of the society - constitute more than half the text.

it wasn't offered as biography; as Wormald remarked, the "first and last serious biographer" of Clarendon was T. H. Lister in 1838.

The reason for this biographical refusal must be Clarendon's own massive self-presentation. In the *History*, his own *Life* and its *Continuation* of 1672, he has imposed, or interposed, his version of himself and his times, and this has made him less rather than more accessible to biographers. Only for the seven years of his Restoration authority and prominence is there a flow of rich and varied comment from other sources. The problem of the biographer is sufficiently illustrated by Wormald's reminder that "did we not possess his own writings, it would never have occurred to a historian to regard him as the . . . partisan of the episcopalian interest". And Clarendon's pages on Falkland and his *convivium* at Great Tew must often have prompted the question, "Did no one else notice and remember?" Horace Walpole simply scoffed: it was all done by Clarendon's "magic of words", and Falkland was really just "a virtuous well-meaning man with a moderate understanding, who got knocked on the head early in the civil war".

Harris's approach to these matters is straightforward, consistent, original in the sense that it has not been tried before, and accurately announced in his title, *Clarendon and the English Revolution*. Almost two-thirds of his book are devoted to the events of 1640-60, as participated in, recorded and commented on by the author of the *History of the Rebellion*. A further substantial narrative exhibits Clarendon as Lord Chancellor at the Restoration, in spite of his gout a man of many committees (except for Ireland, of which he had begged "that no part of it might ever be referred to him"), yet powerless to prevent the mobilization of interests that eventually sent him packing in 1667. As a frame to this deliberately Clarendonian view of thirty years of English history, there are a couple of chapters where whatever is to do with his personal con-

cerns is mostly to be found: to the first, family, education, friends, influence, career prospects (in all this a disappointing absence of any new material), and in the last chapter, a fascinating assortment of odds and ends, much of it fresh and worth pursuing but nothing doing justice to within the space of a chapter - controversies with Cressy and Habbes, snippets from the *Essays* and the *Contemplations upon the Psalm*, notes on Clarendon's finances, his picture gallery, his library, extracts from notes passed between Clarendon and the king, a Council, and even in the end some Hyde family letters, from unpublished Clarendon manuscripts in the Bodleian.

It appears to be an effect of Harris's view of his subject that these hints of Clarendon's intellectual and personal life should be kept marginal. Clarendon, who wrote his *History* in order to understand the events through which he lived, is offered as our best guide to the English Revolution, and other matters are subordinated to that end. If Milton (who has one unindexed mention) saw in 1644 "a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep", there is certainly much to be said for understanding why in 1646 Clarendon saw that same nation as "infatuated".

Harris's book is a welcome addition to the Clarendon literature, but it leaves much biographical material untouched, with very little use made of the Bodleian papers; and where surviving correspondence from the early years is so scarce, it is a pity that what there is has not been used, for example Lady Ranelagh's letter to Clarendon, about Falkland and peace. Harris has kept up with historical research on the period generally, but he has missed Graham Roebuck's discovery of what is almost certainly a portrait by Clarendon of the second Duke of Buckingham, a masterly specimen of the genre. The best modern portrait of Clarendon himself remains Hugh Trevor-Roper's tercentenary lecture, published in 1959 by, appropriately, the Clarendon Press.

much information about it in footnotes. She would have performed a useful service for subsequent researchers if she had included in her book a full list of the letters and their locations.

Still, the services she has performed are most valuable. The task of tracing, transcribing, ordering and annotating the scattered and often barely legible documents printed in this volume must have presented many more difficulties than the autobiography of Francis Place which Ms Thale edited several years ago. The papers enable one to check, and they largely confirm, the general view of the LCS which is presented in that work - a view of a as a sober though disputatious body, which was republican in its long-term aspirations rather than its immediate strategy. While a few of the spies were very keen to unearth evidence that would connect the LCS or its members with procurement of arms, most of the spies' reports are un sensational and do in well with the evidence provided by the society's own records. There was a sense, of course, in which the LCS was revolutionary. As John Barre said in 1794 when he was assistant secretary, the programme of universal suffrage and annual parliaments implied that "the Society was associated certainly to subvert the Constitution or some of its parts". On the other hand, except for a short time early in 1794 when it had a secret committee, the society's activities were entirely open, and the system of weekly elections meant that its committees had a shifting membership and were quite unsuited to conspiratorial activity. Although during the last two years or so of its existence its personnel overlapped to some extent with that of underground organizations such as the United Englishmen, for most of its life it was characterized by a firm belief in bringing moral pressure to bear. According to a spy's report of April 1794, when a Bow Street Officer appeared at a general meeting of the LCS and some members wanted to turn him out, "Hardy and Thale were legal persons, let alone as their Meeting was legal persons, and Constitutional and would shake his players with terror".

An affair of sanity

Julian Barnes

PHILIP LARKIN
Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955-1982
313pp. Faber. £4.95.
0371 131204

Philip Larkin has been trying to kick his gloomy-old-sad image for a good twenty years now. When Ian Hamilton grilled him for the *London Magazine* in 1964 and asked about his reactions to criticism, he replied (in part):

One thing I do feel a slight restiveness about is being typed as someone who has carved out for himself a uniquely dreary life, growing older, leaving to work, and not getting things he wants and so on - Is this so different from everyone else? I'd like to know how all these romantic reviewers spend their time - do they kill a lot of dragons, for instance?

Over the past two decades this image has, however, continued to grow with the slow certainty of a coral reef. Partly, of course, it is Larkin's own doing: you don't write poems like "Aubade" or make cracks about deprivation being far you what daffodils were for Wordsworth if you want the dragon-slaying reviewers to turn round and call you a funster. Partly, too, it's a consequence of the way a writer's public image forms, and of his importance in the face of its subsequent development. Poets (more than novelists, perhaps) are vulnerable to being summed up and snappily doctored; before you know where you are Roy Hattersley is introducing your work to a BBC TV audience and explaining what's wrong with you: "The poems exemplify the victory of the writing itself over the ideas that the writing contains. . . He observes but he doesn't sympathize, he sees but he doesn't feel." Approximately 100 per cent wrong. It must be galling for Larkin to find himself so quickly understood by half-qualified intermediaries who aspire to a certain bookishness; yet there's little the writer himself can do to reverse his public image - except, perhaps, to die. And even that can't be guaranteed to work.

Required Writing, an assembly of recollections, interviews, speeches and reviews, does, however, amount to the most sustained rebuttal so far of the grouchy persona Larkin has acquired. For a start, his face is slap on the front cover, almost wearing something which almost resembles a smile: this from a legendary shy author who permitted *The South Bank Show* to film only his hands and hounds-doodled forearms. (When I worked at *The Sunday Times* I was assured with all the authority of wild rumour that Larkin had personally determined the seizure and incineration of the picture-book film on him.) Inside, the book makes public more obviously than hitherto the unrepentative nature of the poet. He is, for a start, very funny, both as orator and as conversationalist: his interview with a *Paris Review* dundeehead is an exercise in natty counterpunching (and natty and bagging, too). He writes, moreover, almost exclusively about what he enjoys: the famously dismissive addressee embedded in an array of approvals, even epiphanies. And whether writing directly about himself, or engaged in that submerged

self-examination which takes place when a writer reviews the works of others, Larkin makes clear the pre-eminence of feeling in his world. That the prime function of art is the effective conveyance of emotion is a truth of which the poet never tires.

This revisionism - or rather, this late clearing - shouldn't be taken too far: Larkin is never going to be caught elbowing aside Roy Hattersley in a rush to kiss babies. As he himself points out when reviewing a revisionist biography of Hardy, it's one thing to empha-



size the poet's "gaiety" (glossed as "buoyancy, relish, toughness"); it's a distorting effort to deny that "the dominant emotion in Hardy is sadness". Similarly, Larkin isn't going to stop loathing children, or Christmas, or cats in literature; he isn't going to start yearning for marriage, or liking abroad, or dabbling in foreign literature; he isn't going to hold back from, say, the sudden bilious caricaturing of the loyal readers of his *Daily Telegraph* jazz column; nor, most of all, is he likely to stop believing that life is essentially a sad business, and that any snatched happiness is always shadowed by the peroxide wing of death.

Of these perennial Larkin discontents, the grouchy against Abroad is the most dismaying. In part, as with Amis, it's a simple, honest dislike of the place, plus an admission of linguistic defeat. Fair, if disappointing, enough. But it's also connected to Larkin's rejection of the "aberration" known as modernism. Pound, Plessner and Parker - its three useful alliterative exemplars - are all foreigners. Modernism, like rabbits, can only be kept out by ruthless work from the Customs and Excise men; and if this results in keeping out all foreigners, well, that's an unregretted price to pay. Frederic Raphael has said of Amis that "Culturally speaking, no one ever came through the green channel with a clearer conscience", and the only European writer seriously referred to by Larkin in this collection is Moothart. Unconsciously, the French novelist is also listed by Amis among the authors in whom Larkin quickened his interest at Oxford: Aubrey about himself, or engaged in that submerged

den, Isherwood, Betjeman, Powell, Henry Green, Connolly, Flann O'Brien, Julian Hall and "Montherlant (a lonely foreigner)". That the lonely foreigner's sole applauded work, *The Girls*, is a tetralogy of appallingly plausible misogyny, is a separate matter for dismay.

The Amis-Larkin stance on modernism is sane and bracing up to a point: the point at which it becomes an excuse for a ya-boo insularity. When the *Paris Review* man, scanning the world for another writer-librarian, mentions Jorge Luis Borges, Larkin replies "Who's Jorge Luis Borges?", an answer which recalls (perhaps deliberately) Evelyn Waugh's twitting of his *Paris Review* interrogator, who had the temerity to raise the name of Edmund Wilson ("Is he an American? . . . I don't think what they have to say is of much interest, do you?"). What may have started as an aesthetic declaring that any eventual universality can only be achieved by being local and particular curdles easily into a defiant parochialism. In a way, this insularity can merely be remarked upon, rather than criticized: just as a poet can only write the poems he can, a reader can only like the books he can. But the stance can lead to some curious logical conclusions: Amis's latest book, for instance, *Every Day Drinking*, though in the main a sodeastern of wisdom, at one point outlaws the consumption of claret or burgundy with roast beef or roast lamb, loyally declaring: "British drink with British food". It can also lead to some curious distortions, as when Larkin, prodded by John Haffenden about insularity (*London Magazine*, April/May 1980), defended himself with a spectacular misquotation: "Every man is an island, entire of himself, as Donne said."

Required Writing allows us, if we wish, to discover a Larkin refracted in the authors he reviews and enjoys. Like Betjeman, he is "mellow and memorable". Like Hardy, he strikes an "intensely sad, intensely penetrating note". Like Marvell, in the phrase of Eliot's which Larkin half-quotes, he displays "a tough reasonableness beneath lyric grace". Like the jazz clarinetist George Lewis, he represents "resilience, modesty, bappiness, decency" (well, three out of four). Like Betjeman again, he is "insular and aggressive" (not adjectives of disparagement). Like Barbara Pym, he leaves us with a sense of "the underlying loneliness of life".

Or, to put it more directly still, this collection assembles and clarifies what Larkin Stands For. In the first place, for pleasure: the writer's (Larkin is no torn-from-me-in-agony merchant) and, just as important, the reader's. If writing is more than an act of will, reading is more than an act of duty. Again and

again Larkin insists on the reader's rights in the matter of literature - his right to enjoy a work from the start, to give up if he wants, to require value for money - and attacks the academic folly whereby a book's quality is index-linked to its glossability. There are good writers who speak directly, who move and delight and amuse, yet about whom not very much can be said. Larkin himself is a ready example of this condition. "I think in every instance the effect I was trying to get is clear enough", he remarks of *The Whitsun Weddings* in a thesis-discouraging fashion.

Secondly, he stands for truth (what writer doesn't? quite a few); more specifically, for a determination not to claim greater emotions in art than he feels in life. Both Yeats and Plath are rebuked for "jacking up" emotions to make them suitable for poetic expression. Larkin is against "jacking up", and if this means being the poet of the flat tyre ("Should poets bicycle-pump the human heart?"), then so be it. This admirable loyalty to the level of emotion felt is tellingly expressed in the interview with Hamilton (like the Haffenden exchange, not reproduced here). "For instance", he says, "take love poems. I should feel it false to write a poem going overboard about someone if you weren't at the same time marrying them and setting up house with them. And I should feel bound to add what you call a tag to make it clear I wasn't, if I wasn't." Such a fidelity to feeling is rare (and self-denying): if you applied the Mortgage Test to the average anthology of love poetry you would reduce it to a very slim pamphlet.

Thirdly, he stands for sanity - "Poetry is an affair of sanity" - and quite literally so: the authentication of a writer's work by a disordered private life leaves him profoundly unimpressed. Next, for feeling: he hates literature (and jazz) which denies or fails to convey emotion: poetry should be "moving and memorable". Fifthly (or perhaps firstly), he stands for wit. We may all be kicking empty lager cans down Cemetery Road, but the only way to bear it is to grin. When Miriam Gross, interviewing him for the *Observer*, begins by asking about the sadness of his poetry (Are you a gloomy old sod?), Larkin's first reply is, "Actually, I like to think of myself as quite funny." In this volume his is funny, pleasing, true, sane, moving and memorable; even if he does have a deplorably downbeat way of ending some of his book reviews. Like this: *Required Writing* is well produced, though printed a little too close to the gutter of the page for comfortable reading. On page 232 the name Wilfred has succeeded in gathering an extraneous d.

Voices and visions.

A woman's extended conversation with a mysterious visitor becomes, in *THE BACK ROOM*, a subtle black comedy, a subtle background, "artful and engaging" (*Kirkus Reviews*), in which "the author evokes - rather than explains - and the result is wonderful." (*Publishers Weekly*). In *THE HEDGE*, the winner of the prestigious Nadal Prize creates an "imaginative, macabre parable" that is "brilliantly convincing." (*Publishers Weekly*). These haunting and important works by two of modern Spain's leading writers are at last in superb English translations.

THE BACK ROOM
Carmen Martín Gaité
Translated by
Helen R. Lane

THE HEDGE
Miguel Delibes
Translated by
Frances M. López-Morillas

Twentieth-Century Continental Fiction
\$17.95 each volume

At better bookstores or direct from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
136 South Broadway, Irvington, New York 10533



I have invented

a brand new kind of sonnet
where the octave is
a tanka plus a haiku
and the sestet two haikus.
But is there, today,
one ghastly experience
that vindicates verse?

Outside the chip-shop
an ambulance's blue light
throbs at heartbeat rate.
Someone has dropped dead,
ludily weighed syllables
drip from the draped stiff.

PETER READING

A spirituality for gentlemen

Marc Fumaroli

M. A. SCREECH
Montaigne and Melancholy: The Wisdom of the Essays
194pp. Duckworth. £19.50.
07156 16986

A pre-established harmony could be said to exist between M. A. Screech and the subject of his latest book. Such a precondition is rare, and even less often is it evoked at conferences on methodology to the humanities – out of modesty I would like to think. The fact is that such fortunate encounters, between the right man and the right subject, are as hard to define as the friendship between Montaigne and La Boétie: "Parce que c'étoit lui, parce que c'étoit moi." Like divine grace, it is either there or it isn't, and if it isn't there, then all the epistemological scholasticism in the world cannot prevent a work born under an evil star from being grace-less. To take just one, uncontroversial example: if Sainte-Beuve's *Port-Royal* is such a triumph that is because everything had conspired to make him the right man at that moment for that subject. The great critic had just recovered from his Romantic fervour and the exacting niceness of his taste meant that he was the first to grasp the atticism implicit in Jansenist spirituality. His experience as a poet and an autobiographer (in *Volupté*), nurtured on Augustine's *Confessions*, enabled him to interpret correctly, from within, the exquisite individual nuances which characterize the doctrine and the sensibilities of each member of the Port-Royal group. Compared with that masterpiece of historical and literary *Einführung*, the conceptual apparatus and ambitious methodology of Lucien Goldman, in his *Dieu caché*, crush the subject rather than elucidate it. In this sense, and to this extent, any successful work of criticism is autobiographical.

Professor Screech's book is as brief as it is dense. It is written with the warm simplicity of speech, of maturity addressing youth, of one friend addressing another in evocation of a friend in common. We are here "en message" with Montaigne. Screech's aim is not to say everything about Montaigne, and to this respect the book may seem less ambitious than the same author's epochal *Rabelais* (1979), but this implicit "figure de modeste" is not to be taken literally. The whole of Screech's earlier work had predisposed him, once he turned to Montaigne, to go straight to the heart of the *Essays*, and that he has done. The rest, as the Gospel has it, shall be added unto us.

What we discover here for the first time, and what Screech alone could have made us discover, is quite simply the religious dimension of the *Essays*, the spirituality contained within Montaigne's wisdom. Hitherto, and largely under the secretly determinative influence of Pascal, Montaigne's religious attitude has been studied negatively, as it were. It is a subject

that has been thrust into the margins of the best books devoted to the *Essays*. Whether Montaigne has been adjudged an agnostic, or a pre-libertine or even a good Catholic for political reasons, he has passed as the very type of the secular humanist, untouched by the religious experience and *a fortiori* by that refinement of it by culture and psychological fact which we call spirituality. More recently, the tendency has been to see in him the pure writer achieving a "secular salvation" through "writing". In vain did St François de Sales declare his debt to Montaigne, while a whole current of Christian humanism which dominated France in the seventeenth century was fed by the *Essays*; in vain did Henri Busson, in his *Littérature et religion* (1948), insist on the close friendship between Montaigne and the great Jesuit theologian Juan Maldonado. Pascal has always had the last word, as if he alone epitomized authentic religious experience. He had the last word similarly over Descartes, who was for a long time cast out from the religious sphere by Pascal's remark: "Descartes inutile et incertain". It took the work of Ferdinand Alquié and his follower, Jean-Luc Marion, to get people to notice, in France at least, the religious and spiritual dimension of Descartes's philosophy, by distinguishing this carefully from the posthumous developments of Cartesianism. In the world of spirituality, as in that of art, the Father's house has many mansions. Questions of style, and of adaptation to social conditions, to individual temperament, to a profession, to the historical and cultural moment, all modify the "données immédiates" of religious experience.

As a layman and a member of the gentry, free from all vows or constraints, Montaigne was certainly no *moine manqué*. But must we conclude necessarily, from his liberated "air", his ingenuity in sexual matters, his style and his manners, which were deliberately other than those of the academics and the clerics, that he was not, at bottom, a Christian? On the contrary it could well be that his greatest originality, and his powerful and lasting influence in classical France, rests on his successful attempt to work out a perfectly orthodox form of spirituality for the use of laymen and of the gentry, a *liberal* spirituality quite distinct from the models traditionally conceived for clerics bound by constraining vows, inscribed within a narrow hierarchical discipline and thus ill-suited to the specificity of an independent lay existence. Everything seems to show that such a need was keenly felt in the last third of the sixteenth century in Catholic circles, as an answer to the solution which the Protestants of the Reformation had proposed to this old malaise in Christendom. Granted which hypothesis, St François de Sales's *Introduction à la vie dévote* appears as one panel, conceived by a bishop for the use of noblewomen living "in the world", of a diptych of Christian "honesteté" whose masculine panel is the *Essays*. The difference between the two is that Mon-

taigne's *moi*, which is at once the director of his conscience and the directed, takes more risks than would be allowed to a woman. This is proper for a gentleman, but it does not imply that he was unable, within these margins of extreme risk, to find the right path, in accordance with the traditional teachings of the Church.

Screech does not formulate the hypothesis in these terms, but his book provides a cluster of proofs for it which from now on it will be hard to disregard. By taking it upon himself to confront, for the first time in its full extent, the religious dimension of the *Essays*, Screech is in fact tackling the major difficulty. Unlike those critics who have broached the question before him, his starting-point is not the essay on the *Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde*, although he naturally takes it fully into account elsewhere. However important this particular essay may be, it is only one chapter among many in the work, and there is a strong temptation for the interpreter of Montaigne to lodge the few religious "ideas" attributed to him in this one place. We know however, since Popkin's fundamental *History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (1964), that even the radical scepticism to be found in that essay is in the mainstream of the most vigorous Catholic apologetics after the Council of Trent. Screech is elegant enough not to insist on this established fact in the history of ideas: it is not his starting-point either.

He starts by addressing not Montaigne's ideas, but the roots of those ideas in Montaigne's "experience". Now the root of his ideas is also the origin of the literary undertaking of the *Essays* and remains the horizon of the entire work: an attack of melancholy, with all that that term implies of threats of insanity as well as the promise of ecstasy or the temptation to heresy. Screech is not the first to draw attention to the insistent presence of the topos of melancholy in the *Essays*; it is excellently developed by Jean Starobinski in his fine study, *Montaigne en mouvement* (reviewed in the *TLS* on June 3). As well as being a great literary critic, Starobinski is also a doctor, a historian of medicine and a philosopher. Screech does not neglect the therapeutic aspects of the *Essays*, which are brought out by Starobinski, but he puts the accent on the other side of the topos: the one involving enthusiasm, inspiration, ecstasy and the *furor poeticus*; in short, the experience of the *divine* and the perils as well as the exaltations of the soul. He shows that this zone of *véhémente agitation* is constantly present, not only at the origin but throughout the writing of the *Essays*.

In his books on Rabelais, and especially in his superb *Essays on the Praise of Folly* (1980), Screech has analysed meticulously the scholarly fascination which these extreme states of religious experience, pagan as well as Christian, exercised on the best minds of the sixteenth century: Ficino, Erasmus, Rabelais, Cardano. He has done more than Bakhtin to

uncover for us the Dostoevskian side of the sixteenth century, and who better to draw attention now to the experience and consciousness of this "Dostoevskianism" in Montaigne, who is in this the creature of his age? By the same token Screech is able to show the perseverance and faultless sense of spiritual *good taste* with which Montaigne broke with the fascinations of his predecessors. By discerning and controlling the disruptive energies that threatened his equilibrium, he gave to them the form of a "civil" Christian wisdom, nurtured no doubt by the wisdom of antiquity but softened and pacified by faith, hope and charity. Having started from a solitary, mourning and endangered, he is reunited with the universal form of man, the Image of God, accepting the grace of being that image, however imperfect, but an image just the same, of divine perfection and plenitude. Montaigne appears here as the *Loyola* of a religious order without either vows or ecclesiastical discipline, and the *Essays* as the *Spiritual Exercises* of the modern Christian gentleman. This was to be the sentiment of the next century in France, though not that of Pascal and most modern commentators. In 1668, *Le gentleman chrétien*, the work of the capucin Yves de Paris, offered, in a version different from Charron's *Sagesse*, a compendium of Montaignian spirituality for the use of the nobility.

I wish I had the space to deal with every point raised by Screech's demonstration which, in its sober way, covers the themes of the *Essays* as a whole – his setting right of the traditional misinterpretation of the "enthusiasm" in the essay "On Experience" is particularly enjoyable. Suffice it to say that the book has, aside from its author's masterly scholarship, the two distinguishing marks of the truth: coherence and simplicity. Which, thank heaven, other ways in which Montaigne can and will be read, but from now on this book will be the key to any reading of him in its context, by the light of history and philosophy. It opens a fresh chapter in the critical "fortune" of the *Essays*. It offers a sure foundation for the reinterpretation of classical French humanism, and among other things, of its supposed "liberal" element, which is perhaps less "liberal" or, at least, *libertine* in another way from what is currently believed.

Screech's book may also have other, broader repercussions. The founder of a spirituality for the lay gentry in France is also the founder of French literature. Starting from Screech, it is not now excessive to see taking shape the singular authority which that spirituality was to acquire in French culture, from La Rochefoucauld to Joubert, and Maine de Biran to Marcel Jouhadou: that of a direction of conscience for laymen, more sincere than that of the casuists, but aiming always to keep the individual *moi* within the limits – which are also an assumption – of a simple, noble *humilité*. Itself inseparable from *santitas*.

Fontenay applauds Diderot for his "strategy of difference", his "philosophical art of confusion", his interest in madness and dreams, the illegitimate, the monster and the marginal, his refusal to lie down in a well-made conceptual bed.

Her book is written in an appropriate manner; it is not an orderly exposition but a series of reflections and digressions, less a commentary on Diderot than an attempt to emulate his manner. Like Leo Spitzer and Georges Poulet, she has a keen sense of, and an enthusiastic response to, the rapturous erotic quality in Diderot's writing and her own text too is sometimes successful in capturing that. She is particularly in sympathy with *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*, seeing Diderot's materialism as neither drab nor narrow but rather "an enchanted materialism". On this subject she is good, sensitive to both the strengths and weaknesses that result from this attitude.

On some other aspects of Diderot's work she is less satisfying. Her interest in the feminine leads her into some regrettable lapses. Rousseau may have had his misogynist moments but what he wrote about Sophie in *Emile* cannot be

termed "genocide", and the comments on Rousseau throughout the book are marred by inaccuracy. De Fontenay exaggerates the importance of music in Diderot's work and omits any discussion of his writings on the theatre; she refers twice to a *Salon de 1737*, which does not exist, and shows little knowledge of his art-criticism generally. Despite her commendable interest in Diderot as a figure like Montaigne, she seems unaware of the passage in praise of Montaigne in the article "Pyrrhonnisme", a short passage, it is true, but an important and revealing statement on the value of letting contradictions be.

Diderot called Montaigne's *Essays* "the touchstone of a good mind". This was largely because Montaigne had a mind like Diderot's: synoptic, eclectic, versatile and good-humoured. The principal value of de Fontenay's book is that it is itself eclectic and good-humoured. She enjoys reading Diderot and she conveys her pleasure. Her enthusiasm for the rhapsodic side of Diderot's work is entirely in keeping with the original, and the fact that she does not, on the whole, want to make him a precursor of any current intellectual system is welcome.

The tittle and the tattle

Alastair Forbes

ANDREW BARROW
International Gossip:
A History of High Society 1970-1980
288pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.
024 139744
The Gossip Family Handbook
120pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.95.
024 110971
COMPTON MILLER
Who's Really Who
198pp. Blond and Briggs. £10.95.
06363 1479
TINA BROWN
Life as a Party
188pp. André Deutsch. £6.95.
023 796000
LOELIA LINDSAY
Cocktails and Laughter
120pp. Hamish Hamilton. £10.
024 110931

On jacket, blurb, title page and in the British Library cataloguing data, one of these books has been submitted as "A History of High Society" and another as a "companion volume" devoted to "Upper Classes-Great Britain-History-Social Life and Customs-20th Century". They are of course nothing of the kind. "High Society" as such ceased to exist with Queen Victoria, who never cared for it, though she would scarcely have been amused to discover that the latest sex orgy network in the US so labels itself.

International Gossip is simply a chronological collation of unattributed cuttings chosen from the British Press and also from the *New York Times* and *Women's Wear Daily*, the latter's style being at least easy to spot. As such they may have made, I suppose, an acceptable present and certainly they provide quite an enjoyable *scissors* to dip into, if only as an *alibi* for some of the *scissors* of the decade in question. There are also about 6

hundred very randomly selected and casually captioned photographs, the cyosure of which, for me, was the one of Margaret Thatcher, dressed in virginal white on the Government Front Bench, affectionately brushing something off the shoulder of Mr Norman St John-Stevas. This was itself a reminder of a very similar picture of another virginal-clad Margaret, who also at Westminster was taking an equally cosy liberty with Peter Townsend, both gestures proving to be preludes to all-time brush-off for both chaps.

Mr Barrow's previous principal claim to fame, after ringing up three lemons in a row as doleful deadpan stand-up comic in the provinces, was to have contributed the most boring regular item, ludicrously entitled "Focus on Fact", to *Private Eye*. That he has by no means lost his oarctic touch is demonstrated by the footnotes, hardly improved by attributionless quotations yet inexplicably qualified by his publisher's blurb as "hilarious", which he has contributed to his latest Nescaféable book, a curiously logenous chain-letter sort of paginated frieze, linking up what look at first sight like place-cards bearing what E. S. Turner, writing wittily in the *TLS*, once called "real names if not real people". Various arrangements of lines symbolize the relationship, by either marriage, parentage or siblinghood, that can be construed as linking some 3,800 persons Barrow claims to be "familiar to readers of the gossip-columns". This makes for a great deal more matter than art, contrasting with Beachcomber's so much more homoeopathic doses in his *Immortal Lists of Huntingdonshire Cabmen*.

Mr Compton Miller, who describes himself as "a retired gossip columnist", has to admit that, despite his background of Westminster School and New College, Oxford, his *Who's Really Who* has also been largely concocted from published sources, particularly newspapers and magazines and even from Barrow's own pot-pourri of cuttings. He has listed nearly 1,200

persons under various headings (less than two dozen I fear are to be found under "Intelligentsia") and written short sketches of some 400 of these. I have to admit that I have only seen plaid or had stop and speak to me about 200 of the "personalities" in his address book. My old friend, Sir Stephen Spender, who not so long ago wrote of his "disgrace" at picking up a paper or book in which there was no mention of his name, will look in vain for it, or for mine, if it comes to that, among Miller's tales (though we have both precariously popped up in the nearer 4,000-strong "family" Barrowload). Mr Miller writes that he has plumped for "achievers, nationally known and/or respected... names that will increasingly count in the Sober Eighties", but this has not prevented him finding space for "a former Sixties model, a fun person... a gassy personality with a weakness for Yorkshire terriers and 'difficult' men, she will always create news" (my italics).

The news values of the gossip columnists are often as questionable as the "facts" in their occasionally rather readable stories. Miller's very first entry, for example, describes the delightful Lady Airlie as "the Queen's best friend", news that will undoubtedly surprise both ladies. I found it equally strange to see Sir James Goldsmith described as "a disappointed man" so soon after the authoritative US business magazine *Fortune* has declared his Diamond Corporation deal to be probably the most brilliant ever to be brought off in the capitalist world. I was also astounded at Miller's claim that the unpopular Karim Aga Khan is "a serious improvement on his grandfather", that charming and generous Muslim prince who, in his memoirs, so perceptively blamed the arrival of the wives from Britain for striking the first decisive blow at the Raj. Miller informs us that his book "began at the Garrick Club", some of whose members may be puzzled to read of modest, middle-brow Mr Melvyn Brad as "telly's unchallenged low-brow expert on English Lit".

Certainly nobody will quarrel with Miller's description of Tina Brown as "a talented interviewer with mega-ambitions... who shows great professional interest in everybody", an eavesdropper as well as a namedropper, as it were. Though her editorial deontology at the *Tatler* proved on at least one occasion lamentable, her profiles, as the present collection of them underlines, were as often on target as wide of it and did not merit Evelyn Waugh's

general condemnation of the genre as "always meaning a collection of damagrag lies". She has been perfecting her genuinely fizzy and easy-on-the-eye prose style since her Oxford days, even if some of her essays read like those of an undergraduate who may be good at exams but has not really done the work. She has certainly succeeded in passing on a few of her sometimes felicitously zippy expressions to her husband Harold Evans who was badly in need of some to break the monotony of his We-wuz-robbed-whinge about the funny thing that happened to him on the way to a knighthood, the banana-skin in the Gray's Inn Road.

What a relief it was to turn to Hugo Vickers and his excellent editing of Loelia Lindsay's informal photographic souvenirs (as Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, she nearly a quarter of a century ago wrote a deservedly best-selling autobiography, *Grace and Favour*). For he opens his preface with a salutary reminder that "gossip" is a far more interesting and amusing pastime than just ill-written, usually ill-spelt and inaccurate snippets, often about what from one of the books above I have now learned to qualify as a "wall-to-wall nobody". Mr Vickers let his tape-recorder run at the luncheon-table to immortalize a dialogue that has the ring of real gossip between Diana Cooper and Loelia Lindsay that would surely have appealed to their dear friend Noël Coward:

D: Now... is it true that... is dead?
L: Yes, he's dead. I nearly rang you up but I thought why tell you the bad news, not that it is all that bad news, let's face it.
D: It's jolly good news.
L: Well, she doesn't take quite that line.

And so on and so forth, but even though she, in fact the widow, has since died, there will be no names, no pack-drill here.

In a recent American novel, a female character announced that she had "spent my whole life among famous people – Camus and Sartre and Truman Capote and Elizabeth Taylor and Maria Callas and David Frost. They're the only kind of people I feel comfortable with". While Loelia Lindsay's gregariousness has been eclectic in a different way, there are, among the 300 or so friends and acquaintances more or less happily and/or fuzzily snapped in this pleasing book, not only nobles and swells in and out of the Almanach de Gotha but also Evelyn Waugh, Peter Quennell and the present reviewer, though the last three, not surprisingly, are not to be found in the same group.

The art of confusion

John Hope Mason

ELISABETH DE FONTENAY
Diderot: Reason and Romanticism
214pp. New York: Braziller.
0876 10355

Like the Renaissance or Romanticism, the Enlightenment was many things. But while the protean character of the first two has long been recognized this Enlightenment has long been seen as a single-track movement, producing one-dimensional men. Heidegger's *Jüdische Denker*, which set out to treat morally like the natural sciences, was seen as more representative than the severe criticism of that work made by Turgot, Diderot and Rousseau, and Holbach's militant atheism was taken as more typical than Voltaire's antediluvianism. Criticism of this view is not new – Cesareo's *Die Philosophie des Aufklärung* mounted sustained attack on it fifty years ago – but only recently has the general picture of a blind and facile movement begun to be replaced by something historically more accurate and intellectually more rewarding. A symptom of this

change has been the interest in the writings of Diderot, for nothing demonstrates the richly diverse nature of the Enlightenment better than them. The assumptions and objectives Diderot shared with his contemporaries were matters of continual disagreement, doubt and reappraisal. The programmatic articles in the *Encyclopédie* were one side of the coin; the other was the explosive, bewildering and inconclusive dialogue, *Le Neveu de Rameau*.

For Elisabeth de Fontenay it is the questioning, unresolved aspect of Diderot that most recommends his work today. She feels the need to rescue it from those who dismiss the Enlightenment as naively positivist or from those who see in Diderot some kind of proto-Marxist. (One of the bizarre features of eighteenth-century studies has been that because of his materialism and (possibly) evolutionism, and because of the admiration Marx, Engels and Lenin had for him, Diderot – whose general values we would now call liberal – has been proclaimed by Marxist scholars, while Rousseau's whose ideas were truly revolutionary and whose influence on Marx via Hegel was immense, has generally been dismissed as hopelessly limited and petit bourgeois.) De

Fontenay applauds Diderot for his "strategy of difference", his "philosophical art of confusion", his interest in madness and dreams, the illegitimate, the monster and the marginal, his refusal to lie down in a well-made conceptual bed.

Her book is written in an appropriate manner; it is not an orderly exposition but a series of reflections and digressions, less a commentary on Diderot than an attempt to emulate his manner. Like Leo Spitzer and Georges Poulet, she has a keen sense of, and an enthusiastic response to, the rapturous erotic quality in Diderot's writing and her own text too is sometimes successful in capturing that. She is particularly in sympathy with *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*, seeing Diderot's materialism as neither drab nor narrow but rather "an enchanted materialism". On this subject she is good, sensitive to both the strengths and weaknesses that result from this attitude.

On some other aspects of Diderot's work she is less satisfying. Her interest in the feminine leads her into some regrettable lapses. Rousseau may have had his misogynist moments but what he wrote about Sophie in *Emile* cannot be

termed "genocide", and the comments on Rousseau throughout the book are marred by inaccuracy. De Fontenay exaggerates the importance of music in Diderot's work and omits any discussion of his writings on the theatre; she refers twice to a *Salon de 1737*, which does not exist, and shows little knowledge of his art-criticism generally. Despite her commendable interest in Diderot as a figure like Montaigne, she seems unaware of the passage in praise of Montaigne in the article "Pyrrhonnisme", a short passage, it is true, but an important and revealing statement on the value of letting contradictions be.

Diderot called Montaigne's *Essays* "the touchstone of a good mind". This was largely because Montaigne had a mind like Diderot's: synoptic, eclectic, versatile and good-humoured. The principal value of de Fontenay's book is that it is itself eclectic and good-humoured. She enjoys reading Diderot and she conveys her pleasure. Her enthusiasm for the rhapsodic side of Diderot's work is entirely in keeping with the original, and the fact that she does not, on the whole, want to make him a precursor of any current intellectual system is welcome.

Lines on lineage

John Moncreiffe of that Ilk
ROBERT LACEY
Aristocrats
198pp. Hutchinson/BBC. £9.95.
019 1542901
0800-0563 302408

Robert Lacey's observant book is not about aristocrats in general but about six millionaires selected from noble European families. Lacey chooses the Duke of Westminster for his British aristocrat; he could equally well have chosen Ludovic Kennedy (look him up in *Debut or Burke* under Alisa). He seems to acquire aristocracy with ease, which again he equates with some "accident of birth". It is no accident that Lord Salisbury's nuptials produce Celia and not Gaffer. Moreover, by no means all peers are old-fashioned gents.

About one third belong to medieval aristocratic families, one third to families new between Elizabethan and Victorian times, and one third emerged (often from the working class) in the nineteenth century. Thus we have an excellent upper house: chosen by the lot of birth from all ages and class origins, leavened by the voice of life peers; to act as a common-sense pressure-free jury and moderate temporarily any oppression by the otherwise all-powerful Commons. Yet Lacey still subconsciously thinks of the peerage as mostly substantial landowners: "less than 8% of Britain's hereditary peerage have been reduced to opening their houses to the public". Reduced? It's hard to think of any of them who have houses grand enough to open to the public that do not do so.

Lacey is astute when he not generalizing the word "feudal" as always simply implied. Feudal lords were as much administrators as warriors; some were legally compelled to employ a mill, hence the local monopoly they enjoyed in return. "Marquis" was never an aristocratic title while "Archduke" is only a Russian prince's before 1911.

ARIEL BOOKS

ORWELL Remembered

Audrey Coppard and Bernard Crick, George Orwell's biographer, have compiled this selection of personal reminiscences from Orwell's friends and acquaintances. With contributions from those who knew him at prep school and at Eton, in Paris and in London, and those who fought alongside him in the Spanish Civil War, they reveal the complexities and contradictions of Orwell's personality and ideas.

£3.95

AT YOUR BOOKSELLER FROM 5 JANUARY

BBC PUBLICATIONS

The high and the historical

David Bindman

RONALD PAULSON
Book and Painting: Shakespeare, Milton and the Bible
Literary Texts and the Emergence of English Painting
236pp. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. \$19.95.
0870493582

Book and Painting is the latest volume in Ronald Paulson's ambitious exploration of the relationship between literature and art in England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It grows out of his discussion of the subject in *Emblem and Expression* (1975), and we are urged to see it as a companion volume to *Literary Landscapes: Turner and Constable*, published in 1982. *Emblem and Expression* was a cogently argued work full of unexpected insights; *Book and Painting*, it must be said, is not and has obviously been put together in a great hurry.

"Book" in the title stands for the works of high literature, Shakespeare, Milton and the Bible, and "Painting" for the central tradition of English history painting, which is oddly described as leading from Hogarth through Blake and Fuseli to Turner. Of these only Fuseli would normally be called a history painter, and he was a fully developed artist before he settled in England. The introduction begins with the challenging claim that "There is a real sense in which English painting (that is, painting by Englishmen, not by foreigners who happened to reside in England) was a branch of literature rather than art", and reaches the facile conclusion that "The appropriate response may therefore be to assimilate [Hogarth] to the literature rather than to the art of the period and so to the methods of literary criticism". In this case, at least, such an annexation produces a peculiarly one-sided view of English art in which Constable is a difficult case; Turner becomes a history painter and the watercolour painters are scarcely mentioned.

The book's central argument assumes that Hogarth is the essential Shakespearean artist whose work is devoted to "nature" and follows a principle of variety. The Bible, on the other hand, is presumed to affect painters according to the dichotomy in Renaissance painting between the "free spirituality" of the Sistine Chapel, inherited by Rubens in the Whitehall Ceiling, and the earthbound character of the Raphael Cartoons, which are described as "virtually conversational pictures on a large scale". The mode of Michelangelo and Rubens is interpreted as authoritarian and judgmental, while that of Raphael is seen as more human and "Protestant oriented" (a particularly odd description given that the Cartoons were designs for tapestries to go in the Sistine Chapel). The shift towards Miltonic rather than Shakespearean modes in the latter part of the century is symptomatic of a new interest in intense personal relationships and the conflict of powerful forces. The contrasts in Milton between high and low, light and dark, are reflected particularly in Fuseli's paintings, whose work is supposed to derive specifically from the "mock-mode" in *Paradise Lost* associated with the Sons of Belial. It is from these "sublime" contrasts that Turner takes his place in the tradition, uniting his Miltonic inheritance with the Shakespearean in the mock-heroic mode of his figures.

Particular works of art are discussed in detail and there are a number of minor themes, some deriving from Paulson's previous books, others new. A basic supposition, presumably drawn from structuralist theory, is that all modes can be defined by the "Other". So the mock-heroic of Don Quixote serves to define, while at the same time avoiding, the constraints of the true heroic style. It follows that Hogarth was at all times deeply dependent upon history painting despite the contemporaneity of most of his subjects, and that he, and other English artists even in the first half of the century, wanted above all to paint history. So the artist himself becomes a kind of Don Quixote who begins to romance but is constrained, by reality. This neat theory, apart from overestimating the appeal of history painting at least until the advent of Reynolds, grossly oversimplifies the

equivocal attitude of most artists towards earlier art.

Though it is arguable that English artists felt awe towards the achievements of Shakespeare and Milton, their sense of inferiority and self-assertion was directed more towards foreign painters. Hogarth, despite his notorious Francophobia, learned much of what he knew about painting directly or indirectly from French artists; his supposed Englishness only predominates when he is seen as a maker of "texts" and not of paintings in all their physical complexity. Hogarth is characterized by Paulson as an "oppositional" figure, whose instinctive identification with the underdog is deeply embedded in the structure of his paintings. If, in Hogarth's early painting of "Falstaff as his Recruits", we were to make the obvious assumption that Falstaff is merely a comic figure we would, it appears, be missing the deeper implication that he is a type of Blake's Urizen, the presiding deity of the fallen world. This unpromising suggestion is based on a tortuous account of the painting's descent from the depiction of God the Father on the Sistine Chapel ceiling via Rubens's "Solemn" depiction of James I on the Whitehall Ceiling, so that poor Falstaff becomes a mock-heroic paradigm of authority in its ultimate form. It seems hardly worth pointing out that Hogarth's attitude was complex, and that it might be anachronistic to assume that the imprisonment of his father in the Fleet Prison had made him implacably opposed to authority. In fact Hogarth was a friend of John Huggins, the notoriously rapacious owner of the patent for the Fleet Prison, and it is possible that the painting of "The Committee of the House of Commons" (National Portrait Gallery) was part of Huggins's campaign to claim that he

was unaware of the sufferings of the prisoners. Hogarth always had close friends among the professions he satirized and he was often patronized by these in effect.

Paulson is, however, clearly more interested in deeper structures than these reachable by historical evidence, and the *topoi* of the Choice of Hercules and the Judgment of Solomon are taken to express Hogarth's psychology in ways that are alleged to be observable in the paintings, particularly those of the 1730s. Hogarth thus becomes Hercules seeking to exercise choice, while Sir James Thornhill his father-in-law becomes Solomon. In a discussion of "A Scene from the Tempest" it is revealed that Ferdinand is Hogarth, Miranda Jane Hogarth and Prospero Thornhill. This interpretation appears to rest only on the fact that Thornhill at first refused to allow his daughter to marry the young painter, from which it is assumed that the two men were deadly rivals for the possession of Jane. It is hardly worth bothering to refute such an idea, which has about as much credibility as the silly stories in Ephraim Hardcastle's *Wine and Walnuts*. The same struggle is also seen to lie behind the painting of "Satan, Sin and Death" (Tate Gallery) which, we are assured, "expresses the deepest level of conflict in his Beggars' Opera and Tempest paintings".

Paulson's discussion of Blake is more restrained and correspondingly more convincing. He resolves the problems of Blake's attitude towards Milton's Satan by claiming that he adopts Milton's Old Testament framework but shifts the point of view from Creator to creatures. Blake thus represents the "contrary egotistical sublime" to Milton, a view which, though tenable, assumes that Blake's position towards Milton remained static. Blake's dependence upon Michelangelo and Raphael is

overstated, and the author attributes to him a knowledge of their iconography he is unlikely to have had. The chapter on Zoffany, Fuseli and the "Miltonic Shakespeare" will be partly familiar to readers of *Emblem and Expression*, though Reynolds's remark that painting "must be done at one blow" has now become, unaccountably, an argument against the meditative activities of the modern state, sometimes recoil in stupefaction and dismay at their ungraspable complexity. So many people, institutions, processes, superimposed on each other in a fearful palimpsest of often contradictory intentions and instruments. A continuous process of cyclical change and decay makes accurate cartography almost impossible. Some years ago Anthony King asked why Britain was becoming so hard to govern, and answered his own question in part by reference to the enormous number of "dependency relationships" involved in the governmental process - not only between politicians and officials, ministries and legislatures, but also between governments and the many other groups and organizations whose participation and consent has become necessary to keep the system working.

But what are governments actually doing? And how do they secure that participation and consent? To answer "legislation" or "negotia-

tion" takes us little further; the type and content of laws, or of negotiated agreements, makes these categories too broad to be of much use. Christopher C. Heed's elegant little book now offers us a way into the jungle. It is not a map but a taxonomy, aimed at helping us to analyse and identify the many instruments or "tools" available to governments and used by them to secure the compliance of their subjects and collaborators. He distinguishes *detectors* - tools enabling government to find out what is going on - from *effectors* - those through which government can try to act on society. The same four basic resources underpin both: *nedality* (viz. the property of being located at the centre of an information network), *treasure*, *authority* and *organization*. He argues that the apparently numberless variety of methods used by governments to govern can be understood as the products of quite a limited number of such tools, resources and their subcategories. Government, for example, is its relations with private industry, may exploit its nedality to find out whether firms are complying with safety legislation, or to give firms information they need about export opportunities; it may use its treasure to bribe them with grants to invest in areas of high unemployment; it may use its authority to honour successful exporters by Queen's Awards, or to forbid the production or export of certain types of goods. Treasure is

Detecting and effecting

William Plowden

CHRISTOPHER C. HEED
The Tools of Government
178pp. Macmillan. £12.50 (paperback, £4.95).
0333 343936

Even academic students of government, contemplating the activities of the modern state, sometimes recoil in stupefaction and dismay at their ungraspable complexity. So many people, institutions, processes, superimposed on each other in a fearful palimpsest of often contradictory intentions and instruments. A continuous process of cyclical change and decay makes accurate cartography almost impossible. Some years ago Anthony King asked why Britain was becoming so hard to govern, and answered his own question in part by reference to the enormous number of "dependency relationships" involved in the governmental process - not only between politicians and officials, ministries and legislatures, but also between governments and the many other groups and organizations whose participation and consent has become necessary to keep the system working.

But what are governments actually doing? And how do they secure that participation and consent? To answer "legislation" or "negotia-

The rift of tongues

Dick Leonard

JOHN FITZMAURICE
The Politics of Belgium: Crisis and Compromise
in a Plural Society
256pp. Hurst. £12.50.
090638 890

Tucked away in the north-east corner of Belgium is a cluster of villages, nestled against the Dutch border, collectively known as the Fourons. Their total population is not much over 4,000, and nearly all of them speak an obscure German dialect which very few of their fellow-countrymen can understand. This would be of little consequence, perhaps, except that about two-thirds of the Fouronnais are under the misapprehension that they speak French, while the remaining one-third suffer from the delusion that they are speaking Dutch.

Some twenty years ago the area was transferred from the French-speaking Liège province to Dutch-speaking Limburg, and over since it has been a prime flashpoint in the perennial Belgian linguistic conflict. In the 1982 local elections a group entitled "Retour à Liège" swept all before it and proceeded to nominate their leader, José Happart - a man with a police record for extremist activities - as mayor. Immediately, all the Flemish ministers to Wilfried Martens's coalition government threatened to resign if the appointment was approved, while all the French-speaking ministers said they would go if it was not. For a fortnight the government's life hung by a thread, and it was only saved by a messy compromise under which M. Happart became "acting mayor". In return, he was asked to learn at least enough Dutch to be able to conduct marriages in that language.

John Fitzmaurice does not include an account of the Fourons problem in his new book on Belgian politics, but anybody reading it will no longer be puzzled by such examples of extreme intransigence, which regularly perplex the large number of highly educated foreigners working in Belgium for the European Economic Community, NATO or the many multinational companies that have their European headquarters in Brussels or Antwerp.

Fitzmaurice, himself a Eurocrat, sets his story in a long historical perspective, beginning with a brief history of fifty pages, starting at the end of the nineteenth century. According to this account, current tensions can be traced back to 1825, when French invaders took over the northern half of the territory, leaving a Gallo-Roman civilization in the south. The linguistic boundary established there has continued to this day, though the languages spoken on either side of the divide

have changed out of recognition. It is this division which has made Belgium the most artificial of all European states and is the reason why national feeling (except perhaps during and after the First World War) has been noticeably weaker than in any of its neighbours. Fitzmaurice points out that the Independent state created in 1830 "was born out of great power interests and expediency as much as of a genuine 'national' feeling". Moreover, the revolution which preceded it was entirely the work of French-speakers - the Flemish provinces were passive bystanders.

The main thesis of Fitzmaurice's book is that the two linguistic groups are no nearer harmony today than they were in 1830. Whereas it was the Flemings who were disaffected throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and at least up until 1940, it is now the French-speakers who feel most alienated. Once despised Cinderellas, it is now the Dutch-speaking majority which lives in the richer half of the country, with much higher foreign investment and lower unemployment. The achievement of legal parity between the two languages has, in fact, put the French-speakers at a practical disadvantage. Nearly all public sector jobs, where bilingualism is a prerequisite, are now occupied by Flemings. They - or the more ambitious of them - have taken their French lessons in school seriously, whereas for too long most Francophones regarded their Dutch lessons as a joke. That their current frustrations are the mirror image of those long felt by their Flemish neighbours makes them no easier to bear.

Fitzmaurice conscientiously describes the functions of all the more important Belgian institutions - the monarchy, government, the electoral system, the political parties (at least the Communists now split on linguistic lines), the trade unions, employers' organizations, pressure groups and the press. He recounts in detail the struggle to set up separate administrations for Flanders, Walloonia and Brussels, culminating in the partial settlement of 1981. His conviction, which is probably well founded, is that there is no future for Belgium except as the least form of confederation, but that this would be a great deal more satisfactory than the alternative of total separation.

Speaking both languages, he writes with equal sympathy for both linguistic groups - a difficult feat, as most foreigners in Belgium stand to be over-exposed to the Francophone case. It is a rare foreigner, too, who is not intensely irritated by what often appears to be the most obscurantist kind of stubbornness of the most patient, few, if any, Belgians have ever been killed because of inter-communal differences. Would that this were so in Northern Ireland.

by definition exhaustible; authority, if sensibly used, need not be.

The tools and their applications listed by Heed are illustrated by a formidable variety of examples cited from an equally disconcerting range of sources, embracing alike J. Mitchell, *Reminiscences of my Life in the Highlands* (1883) and Sir E. Troup, *The Home Office* (1925), as well as more familiar works of modern political science.

Heed points out that his rational analysis of what he calls "government's tool kit" does not reflect the way the kit is used in real life; he approvingly quotes Renate Mayntz to the effect that the choice by government of one policy tool rather than another is rarely made rationally, that is to say, with a full knowledge and appreciation of the alternatives. No close observer of governments will disagree with that statement.

It is in this context that Heed's book is slightly disappointing. It would have been interesting if he had allowed himself considerably more space than he does, in the concluding third of the book, to examine and explain historical and comparative trends in the use of different sorts of tools by different governments and the influences on the choice made. (A broader sweep of narrative would also provide a welcome change of style after the inevitably episodic accumulation of examples of different species and subspecies of tools that makes up the bulk of the book; it is rather a dull read.) To take one fortuitous example: Lord Bacroft, the former head of the Civil Service,

remarked in a lecture recently that "the main tool of Whitehall is words". Though he probably was not speaking in quite Hood's terms, his remark was suggestive in reminding one that words, rather than anything more concrete, are indeed one of the main tools of government, not just of Whitehall. Words - in White Papers, circulars, ministerial speeches, official letters, television interviews - seem to be used both as a substitute for other tools, and as a supplement to them. Exhortations, statements of intent, reassurances (as about the expected growth of the economy), reproaches, unsubstantiated assertions. The recent White Paper on the future government of metropolitan areas is a fertile source of both these last; its condemnations of the prefigury of bodies such as the Greater London Council are followed by hopeful remarks of the type, "The government will look to the local authorities to co-operate fully with the neighbouring borough and district councils in developing their structure plans."

It is interesting to speculate about the reasons for this apparently growing dependence on verbiage. Is it because one of the major resources necessary for other tools - cash - is in such short supply? Or because governments lack the authority to command or forbid? Or dare not do so? Or because they simply do not know how to choose the most suitable tool for the job, and so have to rely on words, as a kind of political Polyfilla, to fill the gap? Though Mr Hood attempts only a sketchy answer to questions of this kind, the value of his stimulating book is in provoking one to ask them.

The morning after

Philip Thody

OLIVIER TODD
Une légère gueule de bois
217pp. Paris: Grasset. 55fr.
2246288010

Although this vigorously argued pamphlet takes the form of an open letter to the present President of the French Republic, it is not François Mitterrand personally who has given Olivier Todd his slight hangover. Indeed, Mitterrand gets a pat on the back for supporting Great Britain during the Falklands conflict, and is congratulated on resembling de Gaulle - as differing from Georges Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing - in not being "un homme d'argent". He is enthusiastically complimented on his literary taste, so that he emerges quite well from the criticisms of a man who proclaims himself, on the first page, as having voted for him in May 1981. It is French society in general, and more particularly its politicians, that gets most of the stick from Olivier Todd.

The television service in France, for example, is a "national invalid", not a direct product of socialism. The habit of appointing journalists or administrators to this service on the basis of their political sympathies rather than their professional competence is a habit shared by all parties in power, whether socialist, Gaullist, Giscardist or Pompidouist, and when Todd asks whether "le ralliement, je ne dis pas la collaboration, le ralliement, il ne s'est pas fait" he clearly expects his reader to have 1940 in mind as well as 1815, 1944, 1958 or 1981. He accuses professional politicians of both right and left as equally guilty of ignoring the fact that most French people do not accept that there is one and only one correct point of view on the problem of national defence or the financing of the Social Security system, and observes that the criticism of the performance of the French economy under socialism "are much more virulent and one-sided in the French press than in the *Financial Times* or *Business Week*". He has no more sympathy for Giscard than for Pierre Mauroy, and finds all French politicians equally lacking in modesty and genuinely democratic instincts when compared to their British or Scandinavian counterparts.

Even Mitterrand himself does not emerge totally unscathed. Although he apparently considers that the USSR is becoming "a militaryocracy", he still has Communist ministers in his government, and it is this bone which

sticks most obviously in Todd's throat. Those who have the worst hangover, he writes, will be those who voted socialist in 1981 on the implicit understanding that Mitterrand would keep the Communists out, and it is their votes which are likely to provide the nastiest surprise in the general election of 1986. Although he does not say so specifically, Todd clearly believes that Communists should be as vigorously excluded from the government of France as Roman Catholics were from the political life of Elizabethan England. I would agree with him when he points out that there were few economic arguments in favour of the nationalizations of 1981, and that these have neither made the French economy more efficient nor notably increased the level of genuine worker participation. His observation that it is capitalism which increases personal wealth and "secrete the freest press" also seems to me quite unimpeachable, as does his observation that whereas right-wing dictatorships quite frequently give place to democratic régimes - as in Greece, Portugal or Spain - "not a single Communist government has so far yielded to bullets or to the ballot box".

Where the argument of *Une légère gueule de bois* is more difficult to follow is the absence of any justification for Olivier Todd's initial statement that he is "encore sympathisant en 1983" in the rest of the book. For he has nothing good to say about anything, and even the current decentralization measures attract no more than the justified if slightly acerbic comment that Mauroy and Defferre ought to show their sincerity by ceasing to combine membership of the central government with their occupancy of the Town Halls of Lille and Marseille. Neither is there any Jeeves hovering on the political horizon with a magic pick-me-up, since there is no suggestion that either the red pepper of M. Chirac, or the Worcester sauce of M. Barre or the raw egg of Giscard will provide an acceptable ingredient. All we can presumably hope for is some kind of miracle whereby Mitterrand himself will cast away his official belief in the outdated nonsense of formal socialist ideology, and become the leader of the "good social democrats" who now form the real majority in France. A bit optimistic, I should have thought, even for a politician whose past career has shown such surprising adaptability.

A recent addition to Macmillan's Contemporary Language Studies series is *The Contemporary French Economy* by Graeme M. Holmes and Peter D. Fawcett (254pp. £15, paperback £5.95, 0 333 32107 3).

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Sometimes one has no choice but to take one's life in one's hands. The twentieth century is kinder than it looks to us, the minor scribbles. We do not often risk persecution, exile or torture – though we feel keenly for those writers who do. We register shocks, as far-off seismographs record earthquakes or thorn-nuclear detonations; which is to say that we have no choice in the matter and need feel none of the pain. The only risk is ever-present is the risk of being boring; the danger of missing a point through excess of solemnity. Like the Bishop who preached against Gulliver and his travels, saying that he had read every instalment and, for his part, did not believe a word of it, we stroll along the lip of catastrophe.

I have just finished reading *Critical Cross-Dressing: Male Feminists and the Woman of the Year* by Elaine Showalter of Rutgers University. I have not the slightest idea whether the article is intended as a jest or whether it is part of a major work in progress. I can't feel easy in the role of a High Court judge pretending not to have heard of punks, so I'm compelled to say in advance that if I've missed something I'll endure the appropriate forfeit.

Ms Showalter addresses the subscribers of Richard Poirier's excellent review *Rorion* about "male feminists". Her texts are, principally, Jonathan Culler's *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* and Terry Eagleton's *The Rape of Clarissa*; Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction* is also featured. The article is an essay in ingratiation. If it is not a brilliant spoof. The feminist critics are found to be, finally, rather weedy. Eagleton's early declaration in favour of this mode of criticism is sharply scrutinized:

One might have predicted that it would not be long before Eagleton would try to incorporate the revolutionary paradigm of feminist criticism within his own problematic stance as an English Marxist aesthete, a political position whose historical impotence he has often remarked.

The choice of term there is unsparing and can hardly, in the circumstances, be accidental. Fredric Jameson also gets a cut of the crop – his "political unconscious, like his political consciousness, has been unabashedly phallosentric". It's not often that such a symmetry between the unconscious and the conscious is allowed by deconstructionists like Ms Showalter; but then she does allow some startling symmetries. She quotes two of her co-thinkers as warning about the "horror of feminist techniques" out of their personal and political contexts.

Like French or Esperanto, they will comprise a language that a person may practice or learn, learn or practice, without having it effect his or her actions outside of the study or the classroom.

Like what or what? French and Esperanto can hardly have been picked out of the list of discourse (or can they?) Nobody speaks Esperanto like a native, and those who do speak it usually flaunt it outside "the study and the classroom" as well as inside it. If I'm reproached for picking on the examples and metaphors of Ms Showalter and her colleagues, I reposit by saying that they have set the standard here. Fredric Jameson is only allowed to ask the plaintive question, "with what organic social group the straight white male intellectual has any particular affinities?" before he is dispatched with the retort: "the organic social group with which this lonely soul found a bond used to be called the Old Boy's

Network". Straight white male here seems to be a subconscious evocation of Great White Whale.

Ms Showalter detects a certain androgyny in the male feminist critics, and asks whether they are engaged in cultural cross-dressing or whether they are set upon "a genuine shift in critical, cultural and sexual paradigms, a break out of the labyrinth of literary theory?" She summons the precedents of Gissing, Hardy and Wells; celebrations all of the "New Woman" and of promises of freedom beyond "sexual anarchy". Her own paradigm turns out to be – and this where I began to wonder if I was being gullied – the film *Tootsie*. She subjects this movie to a prolonged sexual-cultural interrogation, concluding that transvestism is essentially reactionary and anti-feminist. As Robert Stoller puts it in *Sex and Gender*, the male transvestite is a phallic woman, who can get serious pleasure from suddenly revealing his maleness. The pleasure, though, is "not so much erotic as it is a proof that there is such a thing as a woman with a penis". The effectiveness of *Tootsie*, comments Ms Showalter acidly, "is the literal equivalent of speaking softly and carrying a big stick".

From this it is, as she herself rather grandly puts it, "a quantum leap" to the theoretical issues of women's reading in Jonathan Culler's *On Deconstruction*. Culler believes feminism to be "one of the most powerful forms of renovation in contemporary criticism" and proposes an alliance between its insights and those of deconstruction. But as a Derridean himself, he is vulnerable to Ms Showalter's view that deconstruction through reversal does not go far enough.

Feminist critics, she avers, "must choose whether to ally themselves with the reformist position of sexual equality, which denies difference, or with the radical position which asserts the difference, the power and the superiority of the feminine" (italics mine). Later, she comments that what Culler has done, though admirable in its way, "is to read consistently from his own gender experience, with an ironic sense of its ideological bounds. That is to say that he has read not as a woman, but as a man and a feminist" (italics here). It's difficult, confronted with Showalter's fork, to know what to do. No matter how feminist Culler may be, or try to be, he is still the prisoner of his sex.

Terry Eagleton fares little better, despite his efforts to deconstruct Richardson:

In his synthesis of feminism, Marxism and poststructuralism, Eagleton also intermingles (or ignores) criticism, so that there is no sense of a background of feminist readings of *Clarissa* against which his reading defines itself. This may be the inadvertent result of haste, or an aspect of English critical style, but it also suggests a disconcerting insensitivity to the politics of acknowledgement.

Eagleton is then contrasted unfavourably with Terry Castle, a female critic who sees *Clarissa* as the victim of "homoneutic violence" against women. In effect, he is accused of co-opting feminist criticism for his own purposes, of using "feminist language to reinforce the continued dominance of a male literary canon". A difficult charge to beat, given the (auto)biography and non-sequitur which riddle it. Ms Showalter avers her own agenda for the end. She too "has a dream". It is of:

The feminist literary conference of the future. The dominant women there to speak; but she mutates before our eyes into a moribund vampire, a column of flies. The dominant women there to speak; but she has no head. Holding out the empty sleeve of her

fashionable jacket, she beckons to the third panelist. He rises swiftly and commends the podium. He is foretold; he is articulate; he is talking about Heidegger or Derrida or Lévi-Strauss or Brecht. He is wearing a dress.

This is *Tootsie* vindicated at the last. But it seems to leave Terry Eagleton in the position ascribed by James Fenton to God, of being "a serious mistake in a nightie, a grave disappointment all round". Can that be right?

There have been high words in New Haven in the past few years, and they have gone into crescendo in the past few weeks. At issue is something both valuable and faintly ridiculous – the copyright on the name "Yale". The *Yale Literary Magazine* has been published since 1821 and has been affiliated with the university of the same name since 1836. But in 1978 it went broke, as such magazines do, and was bought up by a smart young conservative named Andrei Navrosov, who relaunched it as a right-wing style sheet. Three points at once occurred to the contending parties which drew up around the subject. One was that Navrosov had no title to the word "Yale" in the masthead. Another was that he seemed to prefer nationally-known writers to the undergraduate tyros whom the magazine was supposed to encourage or at least to indulge. Third was that there might not have been such a fuss had the paper espoused the ideas of, say, John Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard.

The third was decidedly the opinion of Navrosov, who described a recent court decision against him as "a political crime". The judge ruled that the name "Yale" could not be used in the magazine's title. Navrosov maintained that when he bought the paper he bought its title too. There are two quirks here, which are that the lawsuit was begun by the magazine when Yale first directed it to drop the name, and that the cost of buying the magazine in the first place was \$1.00.

Much pomposity has been evident. If Yale is so proud of its good name and so sure of it, then why behave as if one small-circulation magazine will sully the work of centuries? Further, if the university wants a paper that will publish untidied students, why does it not start another one? (This would cover the objections of Mr John Hershey, an alumnus who lamented the loss of a student forum.) It is certainly fast and loose for Mr Navrosov to deceive the unsuspecting, but that's what the unsuspecting are for, as his conservative foundation backers would be the first to claim. Yale's contention in court that it would suffer "irreparable injury" is sheer wind. If true, it would mean that the name was not worth fighting for in the first place.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Julian Barnes's novel *Before She Met Me* was published in 1982.
David Bradman's *Blake as an Artist* was published in 1978.
Richard Boinay is a lecturer in European History at the University of Reading.
Avril Bruijn is a Fellow of St Hugh's College, Oxford.
T. D. Campbell's *The Left and Right* was published in 1983.
Michael Crowder is Professor of History at the University of Botswana.
John Dineley's *Reader in Modern History* at Royal Holloway College, London.
Marc Fumaroli's *L'Age de l'Élégance* was published in 1981.
Charlotte Gere's books include *European and American Jewellery, 1830-1914*, 1975.
David Greenfield was formerly Senior Lecturer in English at University College London.
A. Hallam's most recent book, *Great Geological Controversies*, was published in 1983.
Roy Harris is the author of *The Language Myth*, 1981.
Geoffrey Holmes is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Lancaster.
John Hope Mason is the author of *The Irresistible Diderot*, 1982.
Marilee Larkin is Richard Pares Professor of History at the University of Edinburgh.
Dek Leonard is the *Economist* correspondent in Brussels.
Terry Lockett is Principal Lecturer in the History of Art and Design at the Manchester Polytechnic.
Sir John Moncreiffe of that ilk's most recent book is *Royal Highness: Ancestry of the royal child*, 1982.
Stella Mary Newton's books include *Revelation Theatre Cosmology*, 1975.
Roger Nichols is the author of *Melville*, 1975.
William Plowden is Director-General of the Royal Institute of Public Administration.
Pat Rogers's books include *Henry VIII: A Biography*, 1979.
R. T. Shannon is Professor of Modern History at University College, Swansea.
Michael Shelden teaches English at Indiana State University, Terre Haute.
Philip Thody's books include *Dog Days in Babel*, 1979.
C. Vite-Pind teaches Geography at University College, London.
Stanley Wells is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.
Fayula Wilentz is a co-author of *Unemployment, Poverty and Social Policy in Europe*, 1983.
Gordon Wright is the author of *Between the Guillotine and Liberty: Two Centuries of the Crime Problem*.

Letters

Early Industrial England

Sir, – In his review of a number of titles on Sir, Marxism (December 30), John Gryn makes the following remarkable statement: "many other conditions point to the early industrial period in England as one of much-enhanced popular living standards" (my italics). He cannot conceivably be alluding to the squalor and poverty, who forfeited common rights as wholesale enclosures occurred. Neither can he be referring to the working class in Lancashire, where the status of the workers degenerated to the point where their pre-industrial circumstances were indeed Arcadian. The breakdown of combinations and total exposure to the most brutal forms of wage-cutting reduced many groups to misery and thence to violence. Why did not the mass of ordinary people living in the early nineteenth century agree with Messrs Gray and Hartwell? Why were they in a state of considerable agitation and activity until well after the "early industrial period"? Why, also, in this era of "much-enhanced popular living standards" did the number fleeing to the re-pugnant workhouses increase from 78,000 (1838) to 200,000 (1843)?

MICHAEL MAGARIAN,
Trinity College, Cambridge.

The Times

Sir, – One small but important point in O. R. McGregor's review of *The Story of The Times* (December 16) needs immediate correction. He states that both Oliver Woods and I were given access to the archives of *The Times*. Unhappily this was not so. For the period up to the Second World War Oliver Woods was indeed given access. When I was commissioned to complete the book I asked for, and was given, an undertaking that this privilege would be extended to me. Both Harold Evans, who was editor when I began this work, and Charles Douglas-Horne, his successor, agreed to this, but when it came to the point I was not allowed to see the archives and several people holding senior positions on the paper declined to answer the questions I put to them. I do not know the reason for this change of mind, but this is why I was at pains, as McGregor notes, to emphasize that *The Story of The Times* cannot be regarded as an official history.

JAMES BISHOP,
11 Willow Road, London NW3.

The Oakes Case

Sir, – In more than thirty years as a professional writer, I have never felt it necessary to reply to any hostile criticism of my work, but the virulence of Julian Symons's comments and allegations about my book, *Who Killed Sir Harry Oakes?* (November 25), has been brought to my notice, and prompts this reply. I have no quarrel whatever with Mr Symons's views about the quality of my writing, which is a matter of opinion, but I must point out two serious factual errors in his article. First, he claims I wrote that Oakes was to be taken under a pretext to a launch moored off an island just outside Nassau. If he had read the relevant part of the book he would have

seen that I actually wrote something quite different.

Second, he claims that I omitted to mention the towel found in the bedroom where Harold Christie, a friend of Sir Harry, was staying at the time of the murder. In fact, I do mention this, but again he appears not to have read this reference.

I would like to bring to your – and his – attention facts which I assume he did not know when he wrote his article. My interest in the case goes back to 1949, when, as PA to Lord Beaverbrook, I first visited Nassau and through him met many people closely involved with the incident in the Bahamas, in Canada, the United States and Jamaica. He was intrigued by the international ramifications of the murder, and organized research into the case. I returned to Nassau for further research on my own account in the 1960s, but it was not until 1981, when relevant papers were released by the National Archives in Washington, by the Public Record Office here, and new facts on the background came to light that I decided to write my book.

The only claim I make in my book is that it provides a possible answer to a complicated murder mystery, and I find it slightly surprising that a critic of Julian Symons's age and eminence does not seem to have read or understood the book sufficiently to have grasped this essential point. He claims that the book is a "farrago, a piece of work all the more distasteful because of the insistence that important aspects of it use facts since made available in Washington and elsewhere". "What facts?" he asks.

Here are some of the facts I give in the book: Mafia involvement with the burning of the French liner, *Normandie*, in New York dock in 1942, in the hope that "Luciano would be given parole; the association of the Swedish millionaire Wenner-Gren (on the Allied blacklist as a pro-Nazi) with the Duke of Windsor, Sir Harry Oakes, Harold Christie and the Banco Continental in Mexico, during the gravest days of the war, and the height of currency restrictions; the increasing influence which organized crime has exerted on international events, political and commercial, since the United States authorities sought Mafia assistance during the 1943 Allied landings in Sicily; the revelations published in the *Wall Street Journal* of gangster influence in Bahamian casinos.

Curiously, Symons finds facts in my story "distasteful" to what he dismisses as "such infernal fiction". It grieves me that he holds such a poor opinion of my work, but this is a sorrow with which I will have to live. What I must repudiate at once is his strong implication that I not only largely based my account on an earlier book about this case, but I also deliberately used this other author's title. Both these insinuations I must emphatically deny.

The facts are these. In 1972, while in the United States, I read the American edition of this book to which he refers, *King's X: Common Law and the Death of Sir Harry Oakes*, by an American lawyer. I acknowledged the book, together with thirty-seven other pub-

lished books and twenty-nine official papers that I consulted, but I owe no more to it than to the others.

Cash prizes are the advertised attraction of many gambling casinos, and for this reason I originally called my book, *Cash Prizes: Is This Why Sir Harry Oakes Died?* The title, *Who Killed Sir Harry Oakes?*, was chosen by my American publishers and adopted by my British publishers so that there should be no confusion in the Anglo-American market. At the time, they told me they could find no trace of any publication of *King's X* in this country. Had they known of its change of title and publication here, then obviously the title would never have been given to my book.

JAMES LEASOR,
Swallowfield Manor, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

A Hardy Poem

Sir, – Among the poems that Thomas Hardy delivered during 1925 to Macmillan for publication in *Human Shows* was "An Expostulation". So far as I am aware nobody has identified the subject of the poem – the daughter of Wessex who seemingly wishes to leave her native haunts and is urged by the poet not to do so. Over a period of years I have become increasingly convinced that Hardy was in fact addressing his lines to Gertrude Bugler.

What first prompted this conjecture was the phrase "heroine of our artless masquings here". In the same volume of poems Hardy again used the word "masquings", in "Tragedian to Tragedienne", to represent dramatic performances, and I therefore suggest with some confidence that he chose "our artless masquings here" as the poetic symbol for the amateur dramatic productions in Dorchester by the Hardy Players, in which Gertrude Bugler was a much admired "heroine" as Marty South, Eustacia Vye and – supremely – as Tess. The identification is reinforced by the closing lines of the poem, which almost reproach the subject for her willingness to "desert the knee-cropt vale / Whorein your forefades gaily filled the pail". Hardy had known Gertrude Bugler's mother as a dairy-maid in her family's dairy in that "knee-cropt" vale which he named the Valley of the Great Dairies.

The clue to her probable departure lies in the negotiations which were in train in December 1924 for a London production of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* at the Haymarket Theatre, with Gertrude Bugler in the title-role, despite her lack of professional experience. The reasons why this project failed to materialize lie outside the scope of this letter, and are in any case a well-worn topic, but what is highly germane to the poem is a letter Hardy wrote to Mrs Bugler on December 16, 1924, and which she kindly showed me when I visited her recently. The two sentences that particularly caught my attention are as follows:

But forgive my saying that I don't quite like the idea of your going to London (if this comes to anything, which it may not). We are so proud of you down here that we wish to keep you for ourselves, so that you may be known as the Wessex actress who does not care to go away, and who makes Londoners come to her.

It may be that Hardy wished to soften the blow of an anticipated disappointment that he could foresee, or alternatively that he was having second thoughts about the wisdom of launching her on a career that might carry her away completely. Whatever his motives, it is easy for anyone familiar with Hardy's literary procedures to recognize that the writing of the letter provided what might easily serve as the first draft of the poem.

With characteristic modesty Mrs Bugler told me that the thought had never occurred to her that she might have inspired "An Expostulation". Nor had anyone put forward the suggestion, to her knowledge, I do so now.

DESMOND HAWKINS,
2 Stanton Close, Blandford Forum, Dorset.

The Project for Historical Bibliography (PHIB), Director, F. J. Walls, School of Education, The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, St Thomas's Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 7RU, would welcome details of book subscription lists (not only of the eighteenth century) to be incorporated in the *Fifth Supplement to Book Subscription Lists: a Revised Guide*.

Books from Oxford: History

Political Violence in Ireland Government and Resistance since 1848

Charles Townshend

Bringing together a wide range of original sources, the book illustrates the origin and nature of groups opposing the claimed authority of the British state, from local agrarian secret societies to the Fenian organization and the Irish Republican Army. £22.50

St. Martin and his Haglographer History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus

Clare Stancliffe

This is a striking reassessment of the life of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours in the late Roman Empire, as seen through the eyes of his contemporary biographer, Sulpicius Severus. Dr. Stancliffe interprets the historical value of Sulpicius' work, and explores the diabolical of his contemporaries. £22.50

Oxford History Monographs

Dialogus De Scaccario

The Course of the Exchequer

and

Constitutio Domus Regis

The Establishment of the Royal Household

Edited and translated by the late Charles Johnson
With corrections by F. E. L. Carter and D. E. Greenway

Charles Johnson's edition of the *Dialogus* has become the standard edition since it was first published in the Nelson Medieval Texts Series in 1950. It includes the *Constitutio Domus Regis*, for which Johnson prepared a more reliable text than any previously available in print. Both texts are now reissued with corrections of detail and a combined and expanded bibliography. £35

Oxford Medieval Texts

New in paperback

The Evolution of the Labour Party 1910-1924

Ross McKibbin

"Significantly advances understanding of some of the major trends of British twentieth-century politics. The scholarship is meticulous and the story is presented with insight, lucidity, and sometimes with humour." *Times Literary Supplement* Paperback £5.95

Oxford Historical Monographs

Resistance in Vichy France

A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone 1940-1942

H. R. Kedward

"Admirable study... Kedward brings the period alive... Overall, this is a scholarly as well as refreshingly individual study of the Resistance." *Times Higher Education Supplement* "Makes fascinating reading." *Sunday Times* Paperback £6.95

Karamanlis

The Restorer of Greek Democracy

C. M. Woodhouse

"Long awaited... an exceptional insight into the art and wiles of government in an often fabulist society... invaluable." *Observer* The only study in English of this remarkable figure, and the first ever to have been based on Karamanlis's personal archives. Paperback £7.95

Clarendon Press

BRITISH Book News

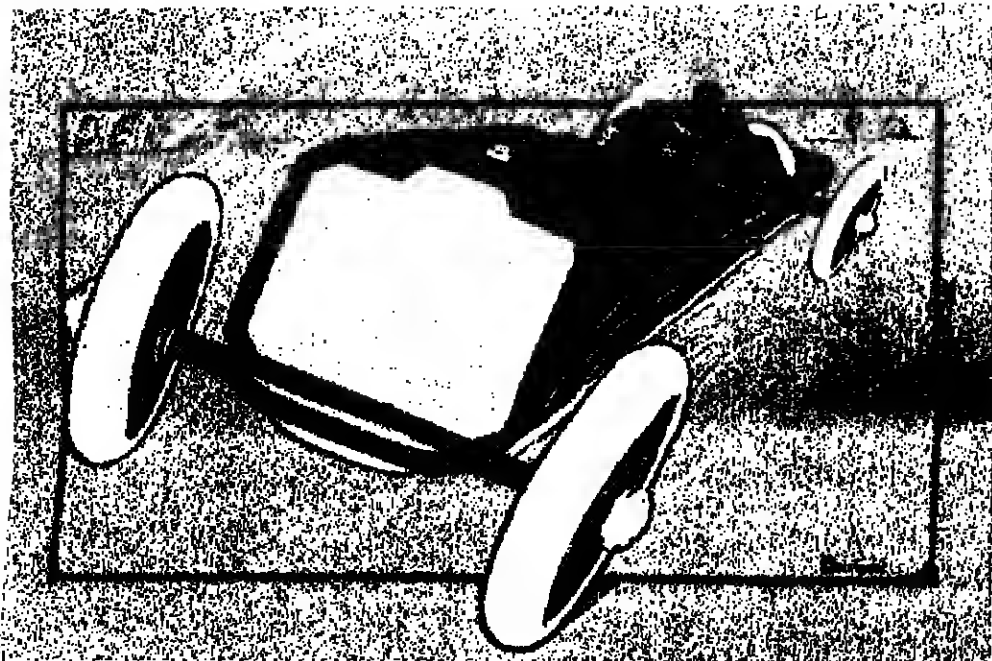
It's the most comprehensive monthly guide to new books you can buy.

Each month you will find over 200 reviews of the latest titles on all subjects, 700 previews of forthcoming books, a personal selection from recent paperbacks and a survey article – don't miss Jessica Mann, Crime Fiction, in January. And British Book News has now been re-designed: it's better to read and easier to use.

1984: 12 issues only £10.50 (overseas £12.65). Send orders or sample copy requests to: Sue Donnell, Basil Blackwell, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF.

*Library rates on application

COMMENTARY



"Automobile Rossa", a plate from Boccioni's *prefuturista* (158pp. Milan: Electa, 88 435 0955 1).

Laying up riches

Roger Nichols

OLIVIER MESSIAEN
St François d'Assise
Opéra, Paris

Messiaen has defied tradition often enough in the past for it to seem logical that his "opera" *St François d'Assise* should bear little relation to the standard works of the repertoire. The relationship, indeed, can be seen as an inverse one: love, instead of being presented as a fatal passion destroying decency and character or as the outcome of an unwisely-queffed potion, has here to be fought for, and the attainment of love (or "la joie", as Messiaen terms it) is the basic subject of his four-and-a-half-hour disquisition.

The work's subtitle, "Scènes franciscaines", is an accurate description of its structure – no continuously unfolding plot, but eight distinct scenes with St Francis present and dominant in seven of them: his explanation of "le joie parfaite", his prayer to God to be made capable of loving a leper, his meeting with the leper and the miraculous cure, the Angel asking the brothers about predestination, the Angel playing the viol, St Francis's sermon to the birds, the appearance of the stigmata and finally his death. This block structure, to be found in most of Messiaen's music, is loosely bound together by a number of recurring themes, though only the Angel and St Francis qualify for more than one; in addition each character is given an individual birdsong, St Francis's being that of the blackcap, which has made regular appearances in Messiaen's scores from *Revue des oiseaux* onwards. But the real unity comes not so much from these deliberate repetitions as from Messiaen's extraordinary ability to stamp every musical gesture with his own personality. This is necessarily true of the many approximate self-quotations in the score, especially of *Poèmes pour Mi* and *Turangalla*, but equally of what is new in language and in sheet music. In this respect the beginning of Act III (the scene of the stigmata) goes significantly beyond the central section of *Les Offrandes* or "Éprouvante" from *Poèmes pour Mi* in the depiction of mystery and terror. At other times Messiaen turns the pages of the septuagies, when the ubiquitous falling diminished fifths of the human voice lines are corrected and exalted by the rising perfect fifths of the Angel; the effect is one that any medieval musician would have appreciated. The tried, as usual, is not eschewed and one cannot but admire Messiaen's skill in using it for cases of contemplation as well as for a shattering climax to accompany "the building and unbearable light" of which the curtain falls.

The singing and playing under Seiji Ozawa's energetic and precise baton leave nothing to be desired. José van Dam conveys much of St Francis's straightforward simplicity with unfussy acting and an unforced warmth of tone, and if he fails to persuade us of the saint's ardent

physical insignificance that is only one aspect of the larger question (to which one must return) of the matching of medium and message, Christiane Echa-Pierre as the Angel radiates "joie" in voice and gesture, as steady in tone as in her ascent of steps under the double burden of wings and robe. The leper, in Kenneth Riegel's interpretation, emerges as a close relative of Mime, screaming shrilly of his woes to an uncaring world and being generally human in a manner that makes the saint's embrace spiritually as well as physically brave. Of these holy brothers, all are sympathetic and self-effacing, with the notable exception of Michel Sénéchal as Frère Elie. Like the leper he provides, through his hot-and-bothered humanity, a character with whom the audience can identify.

In his libretto Messiaen asks throughout for as naturalistic a setting as possible, and gives detailed instructions for décor, costume and movement. The producer, Sandro Sequi, and the designer, Giuseppe Crisolini-Malatesta, have gone a little way to meet his wishes but not very far. Among the producer's many problems, movement looms large. The pace of the opera is almost uniformly slow, and while this does mean that most of the text is audible it also creates black holes in the *mise en scène* which any producer must want to fill. But with what? Sequi never really succeeds in hiding his difficulties here: too often St Francis or his attendants move in no particular direction and for no good reason other than visual variety and the comparative naturalism of the leper and Frère Elie only serve to throw this awkwardness into relief. This tug-of-war between stylization and what the designer sneeringly calls "verism" is unfortunately paralleled by that between the ideas for the décor and their barely competent realization.

Of more general problems, two are outstanding. First the question of the work's availability to non-believers: indeed, to non-Roman Catholics, since much of the "action" is concerned with matters of Catholic theology. At least one member of the audience left after Act II muttering "C'est incroyablement" and belief is in every sense at the heart of the drama. How many non-believers will continue to walk out or will stay just for the music, time alone will tell. But it is hard not to feel occasionally that Messiaen is engaged in a missionary exercise. This involves the second general problem, of the expending of vast amounts of money on a work which promotes the lesson of total poverty, grounds that St Francis was spiritually rich, but even so there is an uncomfortable element of voyeurism. Perhaps these problems will seem less urgent when the work is given at the Vatican next year. But in a sense they do not matter, because the music triumphs over all. Never has Messiaen's orchestra sounded so gloriously apt to its subject, the *opus magnum*, after fifty-five years, finally achieving its apotheosis as the voice of "la joie".

Melancholy misunderstandings

Stanley Wells

SHAKESPEARE
The Two Gentlemen of Verona and The Comedy of Errors
BBC TV

Two of Shakespeare's earliest comedies made suitably light-weight fare for the Christmas season. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is a fragile vessel, exquisitely written in its lyrical and comic set-pieces, but thin on plot, rudimentary in construction and uncertain in tone. Don Taylor's sensitive production adds a few songs and decorative arabesques but does not overweight it. The settings – Italianate loggias, courtyards, formal gardens, hints of distant vistas – and costumes recall Botticelli, sometimes with a touch of Albrecht Dürer. Two statues of naked figures, a female one labelled across its loins "Amor", a male one labelled "Fides", make concrete the classical allusions and allegorical abstractions of the play's language; living statues of Cupid strew Silvia's path with petals and assist her and Valentine in their love-dialogue. The forest is heavily stylized, with tubular trees bedecked in carnival-esque fashion.

The action unfolds clearly if a little laboriously, as if in consideration of the play's relative unfamiliarity. In the opening scene, John Hudson and Tyler Butterworth painstakingly demonstrate the affectionate but wholesome nature of Valentine and Proteus's friendship – arms round shoulders but hearty thumps upon the chest – and Hudson's Valentine is enough of the silly ass to catch the right tone of amiable simple-mindedness in the episode when the Duke (played with elegant authority by Paul Daneman) tricks him into revealing his plan to elope with Silvia. Butterworth, blond and puppyish, convincingly explores Proteus's shame at finding himself forsaken. Joanne Penrice looks lovely in the unrewarding role of Silvia, but as Julia, Tessa Peake-Jones plays against the verse and, like other actresses before her, falls into the trap of maudlin indolence on finding herself betrayed. The boy playing Speed demonstrates all too clearly that Shakespeare's prose needs to be pointed no less skilfully than his verse, but Tony Haygarth, accompanied by an engaging cur of a Crab, does as well by Lance as can be expected in the absence of a reacting audience.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona was introduced to its television audience by a well-considered talk by Russell Davies, speaking from St John's College, Cambridge amid the smorous glamour of a May-week ball. Roy Hudd performed the same service for *The Comedy of Errors* in a delightful programme illustrating, according to *Radio Times*, "some of the timeless gags and comic routines that sharpen this comedy of mistaken identities". Mr Hudd's admirable analysis of comic techniques exploited and elaborated by Shakespeare in this brilliantly plotted comedy seemed strangely unrelated to James Cellan Jones's production.

While it is a mistake to swamp the play's dialogue and destroy its rhythms with farcical business and obtrusive by-play, it is nevertheless necessary to figure forth in character, gesture and action the comedy inherent in the play's verbal styles. Mr Hudd pointed, accurately, to the potentially comic effect of the response made by Antipholus of Syracuse to the thirty-seven-line harangue in which Adriana, taking him for her errant husband, upbraids him and claims him for her own. "Plead you to me, fair dame?", he asks. The line can be both true and funny if we are made to feel that Antipholus, bewildered, is desperately but genuinely seeking an explanation for the lady's extraordinary behaviour, and that indeed she might just possibly have been addressing someone else. It is neither true nor funny when, as here, Adriana has physically entangled herself with Antipholus, and when it is delivered with bland indifference.

Similarly in the play's closing lines: left alone together, reunited at last, the Dromio twins seek to re-establish a relationship broken in infancy. A major obstacle is the visiting twin's all-too-vivid memory of the spherical kitchen-

wench who had thrust her affections upon him. "There is a fat friend . . .", he begins. In the theatre, spoken after a pause on the newly emptied stage, this phrase never, in my experience, fails to provoke delighted laughter. Rattled off as it is here by Roger Daltrey, with no tentativeness, no invitation to us to pause and savour his recollection, no sense that he may be treading on delicate ground, it passes by unnoticed.

There is no lack of acting talent in this production. Though Michael Kitchen as the Antipholus looks as if he might be happier playing Hamlet, his well-modulated voice and courteous manner are unfailingly attractive. Roger Daltrey gives the Dromios a likeable, cuckey chirpiness, and Cyril Cusack is as sweet and touching an Egeon as you could hope to find, even if one feels that his reunion with Wendy Hiller's imperious Abess may confer on him a mixed blessing.

The production is visually charming. Over-elaboration is commendably eschewed. Some comic business is wittily inventive, as when a Dromio makes mouths at his reflection in a mirror which turns out to be only an empty frame. Yet the overall effect is disappointingly uncomic: a colourful but somewhat melancholy tale of misunderstandings and marital mistrust.

In this play, far more than in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the absence of a collectively responding audience is damaging. The medium may be blamed, too, for the decision to cast one actor for each pair of twins. Actors who can pass for twins on stage may fail to do so in close-up. The appearance of both pairs of twins together is managed with impeccable technical virtuosity, but if earlier the viewer has been as fooled as the characters within the play, he is removed from that position of superiority in which, surely, Shakespeare consciously placed him, and a comic dimension is destroyed.

There is, too, inadequate contrast. In the opening scene, for example, Egeon's anguish is disguised by the onlookers' antics; the mingling of his sorrowful by *commedia dell'arte* players, the absurd pomposity of Charles Gray's armour-clad, equestrian Duke, the exaggeratedly sympathetic response of all who hear his story. Cosily domestic interiors throw excessive weight on Antipholus of Ephesus's home life. And there is a flattening out, not only of the varied rhythms of Shakespeare's verse and prose, but also of the larger rhythms of the dramatic design.

The Comedy of Errors may be an early play – just how early we don't know – but it is a brilliantly sophisticated structure requiring in the direction a master-chef's deftness of touch to balance one ingredient against another, and to whip up the whole concoction with appropriate verve and grace. Here it is not so much a soufflé as a pudding.

Masters of Italian Opera (353pp., Macmillan, £8.95, £3.95 paperback, 0 333 35823 6) is one of several volumes of the New Grove series to have appeared since the TLS reviewed the first batch (September 9, 1983). It contains biographical and critical essays, collected, and subsequently revised, from *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980) on Rossini by Philip Gesselt, Donizetti by William Ashbrook and Julian Budden, Bellini by Patrick Leeman, Verdi by Andrew Porter and Richard Leppmann, and each section concludes with a work-list and bibliography. Other titles include *Beethoven* (0 333 35823 2) and Alan Tyson (216pp., 0 333 35823 2) and the *Second Viennese School* (201pp., 0 333 35823 6; both £8.95, £3.95 paperback) which Oliver Neighbour contributes the section on Schoenberg, Paul Griffiths that on Webern and George Perle that on Berg. John Calder have also reissued in paperback *The Second Viennese School: The rise of expressionism in the music of Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg and Anton von Webern* by Luigi Ronzoni, translated by Robert Mann (reviewed on the TLS of May 26, 1978). *La Bohème* (159pp., 0 333 35823 4) by Michael Joseph, £12.95, 0 7181 2303 4) includes a story adaptation by V. S. Pritchett.

Orwell and his publishers: new letters

Michael Shelden

George Orwell's career as a publishing writer was relatively short: only sixteen years separate the publication of his first book – *Down and Out in Paris and London* – from his last – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which appeared just a few months before his death. This short career might have had a good deal more difficulty getting started, however, if Orwell had not come into contact with the literary agent Leonard Moore, who succeeded in finding a publisher for the unknown Eric Blair's manuscript of *Down and Out*. For the rest of his life Orwell had no other agent but Moore, and although the two men were never close friends, Orwell trusted Moore completely and allowed him considerable freedom in the management of his literary affairs.

Recently, almost one hundred previously unpublished letters from Orwell to Moore have come to light at the Lilly Library of Indiana University, opening up an important new source of information on Orwell's career. When Moore's agency – Christy and Moore – changed hands in the 1950s, his Orwell letters were sold in two lots. One lot went to the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, and subsequently many of these were published in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (1968). The other letters, however, went to the Lilly Library, where they have remained, completely unnoticed by Orwell scholars, for the past twenty-five years.

Much of the important information in them is connected, in one way or another, with the story of Orwell's often difficult relationship with his publisher Victor Gollancz. Orwell was always grateful to Gollancz for agreeing to publish his work when he was a struggling unknown, and he was ever mindful of the advantage of having his books published by a prominent, well-regarded firm. But in the years that followed the appearance of his first book, Orwell often found dealing with Gollancz troublesome, primarily because of their political differences. As the founder of the Left Book Club, Gollancz was an influential figure in Socialist circles, but his narrow, doctrinaire approach to politics brought him into conflict with Orwell, who was too independent to subscribe to any orthodox opinion, Socialist or otherwise. To make matters worse, Gollancz tended to treat Orwell in an uncompromising, high-handed way whenever problems arose between them. Once Gollancz had made up his mind on an issue, there was usually nothing Orwell could do to sway his opinion.

Something of the frustration that Orwell experienced in his dealings with his publisher can be seen in an early letter concerning an issue submitted to his political differences. At the beginning of 1936, after Orwell had completed the manuscript of his novel *Keep the Aspidochelone* and had received the proofs for final correction, Gollancz suddenly asked for a number of changes in the first chapter in order to eliminate some possibly libellous parodies of well-known advertising slogans. To avoid the expense of resetting type for the entire first chapter, Gollancz also requested that Orwell "expedite the delivery of the revised proofs". Although he dutifully carried out the revision, he bawled over the proofs during his famous visit to Wigan; Orwell felt that he had been forced to tamper with the novel in a way that completely destroyed the delicate balance of his carefully worded prose. Writing to Moore from his lodgings above the trip shop described so vividly in the opening pages of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell complained angrily about Gollancz's handling of the entire matter.

22 Darlington Street/Wigan/Lancs.
24.2.36.

Dear Mr Moore,
Many thanks for your letter. I have made the suggested changes and sent back the proofs and I trust it will now be all right. It seems to me to have been utterly ruined the book, but if they think I was wrong in that, well and good. Why have I not done this earlier? The book was looked over by O. K. and by the collector as usual, and they did not find it so bad. I am not a perfectionist, but a perfectionist of a kind.

advertisements was allowable, I would have entirely rewritten the first chapter and modified several others. But they asked me to make the alterations when the book was in type and asked me to equalise the letters, which of course could not be done without spoiling whole passages and in one case a whole chapter. On the other hand to rewrite the whole first chapter when it was in type would have meant an immense addition to expenses, which obviously I could not ask Gollancz to bear. I would like to get this point clear because I imagine the same trouble is likely to occur again. In general a passage of prose or even a whole chapter revolves round one or two key phrases, and to remove these, as was done in this case, knocks the whole thing to pieces. So perhaps another time we could arrange with Gollancz that all alterations are to be made while the book is in typescript.

If you manage to get an American publisher to accept the book, I wonder whether you could see to it that what he prints is the version first printed, without the subsequent alterations? I should like there to be one unaltered version of it in existence.

The above address will find me till Saturday.
Yours sincerely
Eric A. Blair

Given Orwell's acute sensitivity to matters of style, it was inevitable that he would object so strongly to this last-minute revision. Gollancz, however, saw nothing wrong with it and went ahead with publication, satisfied that the changes had given him adequate protection from any possible libel suit. Unfortunately, Orwell never had the satisfaction of seeing the "unaltered version" in print, for Moore was unable to interest any American publishers in the book, primarily because it was considered "too British". (The first American edition did not appear until 1956, six years after Orwell's death.)

With his next two books, Orwell discovered that he could also expect problems from Gollancz whenever he tackled controversial political subjects. Gollancz took exception to the analysis of Socialist failings in Part Two of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and sardoniously published his objections in a special foreword to the book. With *Homage to Catalonia*, he would not even look at the manuscript, so certain was he that Orwell's views on the Spanish Civil War were mistaken. Included in the collection at the Lilly Library is a letter from

The Landlord of Himself

"Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body" – Thoreau

Soothing his pain by counting the tiles or slats on the inner faces of a three-dimensional figure with many a nook and ledge, many a corner for weeping in

but which also here and there admits some irregular mullioned panes refracting bits of the world: rows of hulking topiary, a glow

from summer's wide bronze acres or just a girl getting into a car, he trudges to and fro.

The panels are so glossy that they half reflect you, be is eating his heart out, the taste is oddly rich but his shirtfront is tacky with blood like plum-jam and his fat feet ache.

He paces past the spider's contribution, a ghost of triangles and joinery on whom dead forests close, one lintel threatening to crack his skull.

The plot thickens, architraves brim with nightmare, walling a song about a barnyard fox he plummets from floor to floor, hands of carved angels letting him go by down the builder's convenient smooth shaft.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

Gollancz outlining his objections to Orwell's proposed book on Spain. The letter was written after Orwell had met Norman Collins, one of Gollancz's associates, to explain his plans for the book:

Victor Gollancz, Ltd, 14 Henrietta Street,
Covent Garden, W.C.2
July 5th 1937.

Eric Blair Esq., 24 Croons [sic] Hill, Greenwich,
SE10

My dear Blair,
Norman Collins has told me of his conversation with you on Saturday morning, when I was in the country.

It is, of course, impossible to say finally until one has seen the typescript: but I am bound to tell you that the great probability is that I should not wish to publish the book you have in mind. I am not a member of the Communist Party, and there is no shadow of a question of party discipline or anything of that kind: but in political matters I have felt for some years now that I ought never to publish anything which could harm the fight against fascism – and, from what Collins tells me, I think I should probably feel that your book did do that.

I know that it is exceedingly presumptuous of me to say this, in view of the fact that you have been fighting in Spain, while I have been sitting quietly in my office here: and, moreover, you would be perfectly right to retort that you, having been on the spot, know more of the facts than I possibly can. For all that, I have to take a decision on such knowledge as I have. And please don't think, from what I have said, that I don't think you are as keen as anti-fascist as anyone: of course I know you are.

I do hope this will not mean that you will get tied up elsewhere for my non-fiction: there is to come after this book (we have an agreement for your next three novels). I had hoped to be able to publish all your future work: and I hope that the present book will be an exception. If it were possible for you to arrange for this as an isolated book, without options on future non-fiction, I should be very glad.

Yours sincerely,
V. Gollancz

This summary rejection would have been more difficult to bear had it not been for the fact that another publisher had taken an interest in Orwell at the same time. For when Orwell wrote to Moore to inform him of the rejection from Gollancz, he sent along not only Gollancz's letter but also a letter from Fredric Warburg, of Seeker and Warburg, expressing

an interest in publishing any book he might write on the Spanish war. (Dated July 6, 1937, this letter is also in the Lilly Library.) By the time that Orwell wrote to Moore, he had already been to Warburg's office to discuss the book:

24, Croom's Hill/Greenwich, S.E.10
8th July, 1937

Dear Mr Moore,
I enclose herewith two letters, one from Gollancz and the other from Seekers'. I saw Collins and from what he said and from Gollancz's letter I think it very unlikely that he would touch a book of that description. Meanwhile, Seekers' wrote to me on their own initiative and I went to see them. Of course I told them that I was completely to your hands as to business arrangements and could not promise anything, but I saw no harm in discussing with them the probable scope of my book about Spain. They seem very anxious to get hold of it, although I told them that I should have to go back to Gollancz for subsequent books, and they hinted that they were willing to make a good offer. Perhaps you might look into this. One advantage of taking the book to Seekers' is that, although they are rather obscure publishers, they cater for a public that would welcome a book of that kind. I don't know whether you have any means of discovering how [C. L. R.] James's "World Revolution" sold, but the people who read that book would be the kind likely to read a book on Spain written from the non-Communist standpoint.

I haven't been too well and have got a sort of blood poisoning in my right hand, a recurrence of something I had at the front. I am staying in London until it is ready for the doctor to deal with it, but with luck I hope to go down to the cottage about Monday.

Yours sincerely,
Eric A. Blair

Orwell's hand improved and he returned to his cottage in Wallington later that July, where he immediately set to work on *Homage to Catalonia*, finishing it six months later. Despite Seeker and Warburg's publication of the book in April 1938, Gollancz had the right of first refusal on Orwell's next three novels, referred to in his letter of July 5, above. At that point Orwell may well have seemed politically harmless where fiction was concerned. But in his next novel, *Coming Up for Air*, politics emerged as a prominent theme, especially in one provocative scene that parodies a Left Book Club meeting. Of course, Orwell could not have chosen a more sensitive subject for parody as far as his relationship with Gollancz was concerned, and indeed he was not surprised when Moore wrote to him that Gollancz disapproved of the political aspects of the novel. He may even have been hoping that this novel would force Gollancz to release him from his contract, for in his reply to Moore's letter he shows little interest in staying with Gollancz, although he is at pains not to appear ungrateful for his publisher's help in the past:

The Stores/Wallington/Nr. Baldock/Herts.
25.4.39

Dear Mr Moore,
Many thanks for your letter. I am afraid you must be overworked, with Miss Perle away and having been unwell yourself, and I am sorry to trouble you with all this stuff.

I thought Gollancz might show light. The book is, of course, only a novel and more or less unpolitical, so far as it is possible for a book to be that nowadays, but its general tendency is pacifist, and there is one chapter (Chapter I. of Part III – I suppose you haven't seen the manuscript) which describes a Left Book Club meeting and which Gollancz no doubt objects to. I also think it perfectly conceivable that some of Gollancz's Communist friends have been at him to drop me and any other politically doubtful writers who are on his list. You know how this political racket works, and of course it is a bit difficult for Gollancz, or at any rate Lawrence and Wishart, to be publishing books proving that persons like myself are German spies and at the same time to be publishing my own books. Meanwhile how does our contract stand? I didn't see our last contract, which you may remember was drawn up while I was in Spain, but I understood from my wife that Gollancz undertook to publish my next three works of fiction and pay £100 in advance on each. He has also had this book in his advance lists three times, owing to the delay caused by my illness. But at the same time I think I would be much better not to pin him down to his contract if he is really reluctant to publish the book. To begin with he has treated me very well and I don't want to make any unpleasantness for him, and secondly if he really objects to the book he could hardly be expected to push it once published: it might be better to have a quiet frank explanation with him. If we are to go to another publisher, whom do you recommend? I suppose it would be better to go to one of the big ones if they will have me, but meanwhile there will I suppose be considerable delays: it is a great nuisance.

I have earned little or no money since last spring and am infernally hard up and in debt, and I was looking to this book to see me through the summer while I get on with my next. I am also not completely decided about my next book, I have ideas for two books which I had thought of writing simultaneously, and if we are going to change publishers it might be necessary to talk that over too. So perhaps the sooner this business is settled the better. I am sorry to hear such a nuisance.

I hope you are quite over your flu. I am very well again and have been putting in some strenuous gardening to make up for lost time. My wife sends all the best.

Yours sincerely

P.S. If G. wants alterations in the book, I am willing to make the usual minor changes to avoid libel actions, but not structural alterations.

Orwell's firm determination to resist any substantial changes in his manuscript apparently persuaded Gollancz that he would have to publish the novel as it was or not at all. Surprisingly, he chose to do the former. *Coming Up for Air* is one of Orwell's best novels, and perhaps Gollancz decided that he could ill afford to turn Orwell away just as the new first was beginning to come into his own. Whatever the reason, less than two months later, on June 12, 1939, Gollancz published the novel. It was, however, to be the last Orwell novel to bear the Gollancz imprint; for when Orwell turned to fiction again, in 1943, he produced a work that a man of Gollancz's political persuasion could not possibly publish: *Animal Farm*.

From the moment that he finished *Animal Farm* Orwell was determined that Gollancz should not publish it. With this book he wanted a publisher who would be willing to promote him enthusiastically, and he was now convinced that Gollancz would be unwilling to do that. Yet there was still the matter of having to allow Gollancz the first refusal of his fictional works. In a letter that reveals a great deal about his early plans for meeting *Animal Farm* with the right publisher, Orwell explains to Moore his strategy for handling Gollancz.

10a Mortimer Crescent/London NW 6
19.3.44

Dear Mr Moore,

I have finished my book and will be sending you the MS in a few days time. It is being typed now. I make it about 30,000 words. To avoid wasting time I think we ought to decide in advance what to do about showing it to Gollancz. According to our contract he has the first refusal of my fictional books, and this would come under the heading of fiction; as it is a sort of fairy story, really a fable with a political meaning. I think, however, Gollancz wouldn't publish it, as it is strongly anti-Stalin in tendency. Nor is it any use wasting time on Warburg, who probably wouldn't touch anything of this tendency, and to my knowledge is very short of paper. I suggest therefore that we ought to tell Gollancz but let him know that the book is not likely to suit him, and say that we will only send it along if he very definitely wants to see it. I am going to write to him this sense now. The point is that if Gollancz and his readers get hold of it, even if they end by not taking it, they will probably hang onto the MS for weeks. So I will write to him, and then will know about it before you get the MS.

As to what publisher to approach, I think Nicholson and Watson might be the best. I told one of my men I had a book coming along and he seemed anxious to get hold of it. Or else Hutchinson, where I have a contact in Robert Neumann. Or anyone else who (a) has got some paper and (b) isn't in the arms of Stalin. The latter is important. This book is murder from the Communist point of view, though no names are mentioned. Provided we can get over these difficulties I think the book should make a good job of the world they do print nowadays. I am going to send you copies. I think we might have a year or so from American publication as well. About a year ago the Daily Press wrote asking me to send them the next book I did, and I think they might like this one.

I am contradicted now to do a British or American book, which I suppose will take me 6-8 weeks. After that I am anxious to do two longer literary essays, one on 'No Quilts for Miss Blandish', and one on Salvador Dalí, for two magazines. When I have done those two we shall have enough stuff for the book of collected essays (published as *Critical Essays* in 1946).

Yours sincerely

To Orwell's dismay, Gollancz insisted, on seeing the novel; but after receiving it, he took only a few days to come to the conclusion that Orwell was right; he could not publish *Animal Farm* under any circumstances. After this rejection Orwell was free to send his novel elsewhere. But his worries about contractual obligations to Gollancz were not yet over. For

Gollancz soon let it be known that he did not regard *Animal Farm* as a "full-length" novel, and therefore he insisted that he still held the right of first refusal on Orwell's next two full-length novels. In effect, this stipulation served little purpose except to undermine Orwell's position with other publishers, who could not be expected to take a risk on *Animal Farm* as long as Orwell's future novels were tied up elsewhere. Apparently, Gollancz had decided to use Orwell's contract as a means of discouraging other publishers from printing what he considered to be a politically dangerous book, one that might seriously harm relations with the Soviet allies at a crucial time in the war against Hitler.

Orwell first learned of this new problem with Gollancz when he submitted his manuscript to Jonathan Cape in early May 1944. At that point the novel had been rejected not only by Gollancz but also by Nicholson and Watson. Cape, however, found the novel intriguing and offered Orwell a contract for it. But complications quickly arose when Cape also asked for the rights to all of Orwell's future work, for Gollancz made it clear to everyone concerned that he would not relinquish his claim on Orwell's next two novels. In the following letter Orwell asks his agent to determine whether Cape could be persuaded to accommodate Gollancz's demands:

10a Mortimer Crescent/London NW 6
8.6.44

Dear Mr Moore,

Many thanks for your letter. It is awkward about Gollancz. I don't however remember anything in that contract about full-length novels. As I remember it, it simply referred to my next three works of fiction (you could verify that from the contract). If so, "Animal Farm" which is certainly a work of fiction (and may what is "full-length") would be one of them. But even so there is one more novel to be accounted for. Do you think it would be possible to arrange with Cape that Gollancz had the refusal of my next novel (or two novels if "Animal Farm" doesn't count), on the understanding that all other works went to Cape, including novels after the Gollancz contract ran out? In that case I should only be going away from Cape for one or at most two books. (Incidentally, I don't know when I shall write another novel. This doesn't seem a propitious time for them.) I shouldn't in any case go to Gollancz again for non-fiction books. His politics change too fast for me to keep up with them. Could you find out what Cape thinks about that?

Meanwhile how do we stand about that book of reprints? Cape could have that too if he wants it. But the Dickses essay, which I should like to reprint, was in a Gollancz book. Has he the copyright of that, or have I? I have only one more essay to do, then I can start assembling the book.

I am sorry about "Keep the Aspidochelone Flying", but I don't think it worth reprinting a book I don't care about. If you tell Lane's (Penguin Books) I don't want that one done I dare say they'll be ready to close with "Coming up for Air".

I hope it will be G.K. with Cape and this book won't have to start on its rounds once again. I do want it to see the light this year if possible.

Yours sincerely

Eric Blair

In the end, Orwell's efforts to reach a satisfactory agreement with Cape failed, but not entirely because of the contractual problems with Gollancz. While those problems were being considered, Cape began to have second thoughts about publishing such a politically controversial book, and decided to seek advice from an acquaintance at the Ministry of Information. When this unnamed official recommended against publication on the grounds that it might endanger relations with the Russians, Cape promptly decided to withdraw his offer for *Animal Farm*, giving both the official's advice and Gollancz's existing contract as the reasons for his decision. Orwell was understandably upset by this development, but there was little he could do to stop interference from either anonymous government officials or Gollancz. Contrary to Orwell's initial impression, his contract clearly stated that the novels optioned to Gollancz were to be "full-length", and because that crucial term was not defined in the contract, Gollancz felt free to interpret it in his favour.

As Orwell prepared to send his novel to still another publisher - this time to Faber and Faber, where T. S. Eliot was an editor - he complained to Moore that something should at least be done to pin down Gollancz on the definition of "full-length".



"On the road of life", 1960, a linocut by Henry Heerup, a Danish member of the art movement that took its acronym from the names Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam; reproduced from Cobra by Jean-Clarence Lumbré, translated by Roberta Bailey (216pp. Solihby. £37.50. 085667 178 9).

10a Mortimer Crescent/London NW 6
24.6.44

Dear Mr Moore,

It is a pity about Cape's. I rang up T. S. Eliot, telling him the circumstances, and shall give him the other copy of the MS on Monday. I have no doubt Eliot himself would be on my side in this matter, but, as he says, he might not be able to swing the rest of the board of Faber's.

About the contract with Gollancz. If 30,000 words is not "full-length", what does amount to full-length? Is an actual amount of words named in our existing contract? If not, could we get from Gollancz a definite statement as to what he considers a full-length work of fiction. It is clearly very unsatisfactory to have this clause in the contract without a clear definition of it.

Yours sincerely

Eric Blair

Eventually Moore established that "full-length" meant any novel of more than 65,000 words. In the meantime, however, Eliot gave Orwell's novel still another rejection. In the face of this depressing news, Orwell was tempted to forget about commercial publishers and to arrange instead to publish the novel himself, but wisely he decided to let Fredric Warburg have a look at the manuscript before going any further with it. Although Orwell had indicated earlier to Moore that he believed Warburg would be reluctant to publish the novel, Warburg was in fact very anxious to have it, and promptly agreed to publish it provided sufficient paper was available. After more than five months of struggling to find a publisher for *Animal Farm*, Orwell finally had some encouraging news to give his agent, who was still working out contractual problems with Gollancz.

Care of the "Tribune"/222 Strand/W.C.2
15.8.44

Dear Mr Moore,

Thanks for your letter of 14th August. Yes, it is O.K. about Gollancz retaining the rights of "Wigan Pier".

I think Warburg is going to publish "Animal Farm" - I say "I think" because although W. has agreed to do so there may be a slip-up about the paper. But so long as we can lay hands on the paper, he will do it. So that will save me from the trouble of doing it myself.

I am now doing that essay I spoke to you of ("Raffles and Miss Blandish"), & I shall then be able to compile the book of essays, but I shall have to find someone to do the typing as I have not time to do it myself.

We are, I think, taking a flat in Islington at the end of this month, & I will let you have the address when we move in.

Yours sincerely

Eric Blair

Like Cape, Warburg wanted to have an option on all of Orwell's future work, but unlike

Cape, he did not change his mind about *Animal Farm* when Gollancz insisted on keeping his contract with Orwell in force. Wartime paper shortages and Gollancz's reluctance to compromise on the contract issue caused a long delay in the publication of the novel, but in August 1945 Warburg went ahead with publication despite the fact that no arrangement covering Orwell's future novels had been worked out.

The letters in the Lilly Library do not follow the story beyond this point, but previously published letters from Orwell to Gollancz show that Orwell finally succeeded in persuading Gollancz to release him from his contract in the spring of 1947. By that time there was clearly nothing more to be gained from forcing him to abide by it. The controversy over *Animal Farm* had subsided, and Gollancz himself had adopted a more flexible political attitude, especially with regard to Communism and the Soviet Union. In any case Orwell was adamant about staying with Warburg. He was already at work on a new novel, and felt strongly that Warburg should have the chance to publish it. Thus when Orwell finished *Nineteen Eighty-Four* at the end of 1948, the manuscript went straight to Warburg, who published it, with much fanfare, six months later.

It is tempting to consider what might have happened to Orwell's career if he had left Gollancz ten years earlier, when *Homage to Catalonia* was rejected. With another publisher, Orwell might have experimented more freely with political fiction and might have written more of it. Instead he wrote only three novels, one of them very short, in the twelve years that followed *Homage to Catalonia*. As Orwell explains in his essay "Why I Write", his greatest ambition as a writer, "to make political writing log into an art". Perhaps no other writer in the first half of this century was better prepared to achieve that ambition than Orwell, with the great ironies in modern literary history, must surely be that such a writer was matched, for so long, with a publisher so ill-prepared to encourage his ambition.

My thanks are due to Sandra Taylor, Curator of Manuscripts of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, for permission to examine the Orwell correspondence, to Mark Hamilton, Literary Executor of the Orwell estate, for permission to quote from the letters, and to Lydia Gollancz for permission to print her father's letter.

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell has just been reissued by its original publisher, Secker and Warburg (241pp. £7.95. 0 435 35019 X). It was reviewed in the TLS of June 10, 1949.

The misunderstanding of Newspeak

Roy Harris

Orwell and Ruskin did not, on the face of it, have much in common. But Ruskin once said something that Orwell might well have used as his motto for an Orwellian linguistics: "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something and tell what it sees in a plain way". That summarizes Orwell's theorizing about language, just as it summarizes Ruskin's theorizing about art. Let us call it the doctrine of plain representation. It has a simple, noble, fundamentalist ring to it.

The significance of "Newspeak", the most famous figure of Orwellian linguistics, cannot be understood without reference to the doctrine of plain representation. Ruskin was undoubtedly thinking primarily of pictorial representation, whereas Orwell was thinking of linguistic representation. They share, however, an important set of assumptions about the concept of representation itself. The Newspeak of Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a language which, for certain topics, makes plain representation the verbal mode impossible. Newspeak, in short, stands the doctrine of plain representation on its head. The pictorial equivalent for Ruskin would have been a perverse mode of drawing ("Newdraw") in which, for example, all straight lines were automatically represented as curves or wiggles - anything, in fact, other than straight lines. Why any artistic Establishment should bother to devise such a distorted system of pictorial representation as Newdraw is, of course, puzzling. On the other hand, where language is concerned the motivation is allegedly less obscure: it is, quite simply, a social and political motivation - a way of fooling most of the people most of the time.

It seems somehow significant that the term *Newspeak* itself, which Orwell introduced to the English-speaking world only thirty-five years ago, should in that relatively short time have undergone all or most of the sociolinguistic processes which validate it as part of the vocabulary of Oldspeak. What does that show? Different things, according to taste. Some will argue that it shows Orwell's linguistic worries were basically groundless, and that language does laws which scheming politicians and ideologists are powerless to interfere with. Others will argue, to the contrary, that it shows Orwell's linguistic instincts were basically sound, and that the subtle forms of ideological control to which the vocabulary of our public discourse is subject are powerful enough to actualize the explosive potential of new terms which directly challenge them.

What is less controversial is that in the process of assimilation into the vocabulary of Oldspeak the word "Newspeak" has undergone a considerable change. A recently published dictionary of what purports to be Newspeak includes newfangled professional jargon of any and every kind. That is not what Orwell meant. Newspeak is not Newspeak in virtue of being just newspaper Orwell was not so stupid as to think that Shakespeare had already anticipated every lexical requirement of computer-age English.

The *Newspeak of Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a deliberately distorted language, designed to ensure the political enslavement of its speakers. Its aim, as Orwell describes it, is that "thoughts not approved by the Party 'should be literally unthinkable'". That final horrendous notion at the end of the novel, where we are told the details of this programme by which Newspeak will eventually replace Oldspeak entirely, is that vision of how the deliberate manipulation of language could make freedom of thought impossible - remains one of the most chillingly powerful in the whole of English literature.

The Newspeak parable is a parable which is close home to any audience whose native language is English. For there is a sense in which the very variety and flexibility of English as a language seems to guarantee to its users an individual right to think and speak as they please. It is no accident of history that England, more than any other country, has been the seat of the individual control of experts is as a language people as the idea of a "people's language". As people who can draw upon the

resources of one of the richest vocabularies in the world, we can feel nothing but repulsion for the loathsome philologist of the Ministry of Truth in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* who says gloomily: "It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words."

Orwell's parable raises in a dramatic form what is a much wider issue for any community which takes this English view of linguistic freedom: the question of our social responsibilities as language-users. It is to Orwell's credit that he brought this question to the attention of a whole generation who might otherwise have overlooked it, or not been able to focus it clearly for themselves. It is all the more regrettable that his parable took the particular form it did. For Newspeak is, and is likely to remain, unsurpassed as a fictional portrayal of logophobia; and logophobia has become one of the most characteristic maladies of our times.

Certainly Orwell seems to have suffered from acute fits of it. He was not merely, as Anthony Burgess describes him, "a word-user who distrusted words" (se, to some extent, are we all) but one whose distrust of words at times bordered on the pathological. As a professional writer, he realized what he owed to his own skills of verbal manipulation. As a committed socialist, on the other hand, he instinctively disliked verbal skills as skills pre-eminently inculcated, valued and practised by a class-based educational system of which he disapproved (but of which he himself was a highly articulate product). Hence his unspoken fear that to practise verbal persuasion, to engage in verbal polemic even in the cause of socialism - or any "good" cause - might be to legitimize a trust in words which could ultimately be betrayed by words themselves. Newspeak was the public fantasy which gave fictional form to Orwell's private nightmare. But this fantasy has a psychological validity and cultural significance which go far beyond the particular circumstances of Orwell's dilemma.

Logophobia is not an exclusively twentieth-century phenomenon. It goes back at least as far as the Greek philosopher Cato, whose logophobia was so acute that eventually, we are told, he renounced the use of words as a mode of expression altogether. Orwell was by no means so desperate a case: he could not afford to be. What makes him such a typical representative of twentieth-century logophobia (as distinct from, say, the more esoteric logophobia of the early Wittgenstein or the more hindsighted variety of Marshall McLuhan) is his ultimate faith in the aforementioned doctrine of plain representation.

Orwellian logophobia is based on two interconnected doubts about the trustworthiness of the connection between words and meaning. One is that instead of revealing what is meant, words may be used to obscure or conceal it. The other is that instead of revealing what is meant, words may be used to misrepresent it. Hence the generalized form which Orwell's nightmare takes - the postulation of a language which has been "doctored" in such a way as to deceive its users systematically about certain social and political aspects of the world in which they live, and furthermore, "doctored" in such a way as to make it impossible for the language-users themselves to detect the deception.

The fears underlying this logophobic extrapolation are based on Orwell's disgust at instances of what he saw as linguistic dishonesty and deception. This revulsion comes out strongly in some of his most vigorous writing. "Defenceless villages are bombed from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification". The Vietnam generation did not need to find the words: Orwell had already said it for them.

Unfortunately, Orwell's abhorrence of the way man's inhumanity to man can be concealed behind all kinds of verbal façades led him to make an erroneous diagnosis. He thought that there was something going wrong with the English language of his day. His essay on "Politics and the English Language" makes on "Politics and the English Language" makes this perfectly clear. "Most people who bother with the matter at all," he wrote, "would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by con-

scious action do anything about it." Orwell believed that something could and should be done about it; but what he proposed to do simply showed how shallow his thinking about language was, and how uncritically he swallowed the doctrine of plain representation. He inveighed against the "bad influence" of American usage and its "debasing effect". He condemned expressions which he considered to betray "slovenliness", "ugliness", "lack of precision", "meaninglessness" and "pretentious diction". One of his recommendations was to memorize the sentence "A net unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a net ungreen field". In short, he showed exactly the same prescriptivist attitudes towards language as can be found in most published guides to "correct" usage, or any representative selection of complaints to the BBC about the decline of contemporary "standards" of English. Orwell attacks, as one essay on him puts it, "most of the misuses of language that have become the favourites of indignant letter-writers of any persuasion".

It would be misguided to defend Orwell by trying to distinguish his progressive and radical approach to questions of usage from the conservative, reactionary inspiration of the majority of "indignant letter-writers". The plain fact is that Orwell's attitude was no more enlightened than theirs. Accusing one's political opponents of "perverting the English language" is a game that both right and left can play, as recent arguments about nuclear weapons and unilateral disarmament have all too clearly shown. The fact that in the view of many observers the left emerged victorious from that particular fracas should not be misinterpreted. Appeal to the doctrine of plain representation is a double-edged weapon. To those inclined to think otherwise I would recommend consideration of two 1983 examples where the concept of Newspeak is invoked under the banner of writers not notorious (pace Orwell) for their left-wing sympathies.

The first is provided by an article in *The Times* entitled "How Newspeak leaves us Naked" (February 1, 1983), in which Roger Scruton uses a criticism of the definitions provided by the Moscow Novosti Press Agency's *Short Guide to Political Terms* (which countenances "democracy" as genuine only when understood as preceded by the adjective "socialist" and definitively underwritten by the "dictatorship of the proletariat") as a springboard for an attack upon feminism. Feminism is described as "an ideology which, like communism, seeks to abolish history, to abolish human nature, and to abolish every thought which conflicts with its dominant and erroneous idea - the idea of the moral indistinguishability of men and women". Feminism, the article continues, "seeks to appropriate not only vocabulary, but also grammar, and to eliminate gender from a language structured by gender distinctions". (This is presumably a reference to controversies about using the masculine pronoun as the unmarked euphoric form in sentences like *No one ought to forget his linguistic obligations to the community*.)

My second example is Friedrich von Hayek's onslaught on the phrase *social justice* (*The Times*, November 11, 1983). Hayek echoes Charles Murray's condemnation of this expression as "a semantic fraud from the same stable as People's Democracy", and describes the adjective *social* as "probably the most confusing and misleading term of our whole political vocabulary". The villain of the piece is Rousseau, apparently, in whose *Contrat Social* the wretched term "appears as an essential part of the rhetorical substitute for conventional morals". *Social*, in short, is castigated by Hayek as a "weasel word", and a weasel word is described as a word "used to draw the teeth from a concept which one is obliged to employ, but from which one wishes to eliminate all implications that challenge one's ideological premises". The reader might perhaps have more confidence in this description were it not that this condemnation appears under a caption which advertises "F. A. Hayek on Newspeak exemplified". Does that make Newspeak itself a weasel word? And if so, which word shall escape whipping? Logophobia is evidently not a disease confined to any particular segment of the political spectrum.

In case the juxtaposition of these two exam-

ples might tend to cause apoplexy in some readers, perhaps it is worth interjecting a disclaimer. There is, indeed, a distinction to be drawn between the petulant ranting of a Scruton and the political rationale of a Hayek. The point, however, is that both can use the doctrine of plain representation for their own purposes: and for every Scruton or Hayek there will be an Orwell or an Orwellian to complain about the other aide's use of expression like *pacification*, *nuclear deterrent* and *acceptable casualties*. Propaganda always lays claim to a linguistic monopoly of truth.

The real misrepresentations which are central to these arguments and counter-arguments are not abuses of the English language at all. They are much more fundamental. They are abuses of our concept of a language itself. The reason why there could be no such language as Orwell's Newspeak is identical with the reason why there could be no such language as the idealized Oldspeak to which it stands opposed. No language can ever give us "plain representation", and it is an intellectual deception to imply that we should expect it to. The doctrine of plain representation is simply linguistic utopianism. Like all forms of utopianism, it provides countless traps for the simple-minded and endless cleptrop for charlatans to exploit.

As the real - rather than the fictional - 1984 arrives, we find the English-speaking community in a comical-tragic state of legislative turmoil over questions of "plain language". On one side of the Atlantic, British farmers are not allowed to call fresh milk "fresh" when it has come straight from the cow. Why not? Paradoxically, because it has come straight from the cow. (It may, of course, become "fresh" two days later, having been pasteurized in the interim.) Meanwhile on the other side of the Atlantic, we find states all over America rushing in legislation to protect the common man against the complexities of Oldspeak. Such enactments require, for example, that "every consumer contract shall be written in a clear and coherent manner using words with common and everyday meanings". But over the rather crucial questions of which words actually have "common and everyday meanings" and how we are supposed to know exactly what these "common and everyday meanings" are, the plain-language legislators wisely draw the discreet semantic veil of silence.

For Orwell, it would doubtless be one of the ironies of history that the country which took the lead in "defending" its Vietnam policy externally by means of Newspeak should now take the lead in defending the rights of its own proletariat to use Oldspeak for internal domestic purposes. But the irony is not to be laid at history's door: it is a projection from Orwell's own misconceptions about the way linguistic communication works.

Calling a spade a spade is not something languages can do: only language-users. And if language-users do not like the word *spade*, or cannot make it mean what they want to, then they will make another, with or without government intervention. Orwell's classic series of mistakes was to suppose (i) that something called "the English language" lays down the true meaning of a word like *spade*; (ii) that words like *spade* mean what they say; and (iii) that anything which needs to be said can be said using words like *spade* - in short, by using words any ordinary man can understand because the words in question directly reflect a recognizable reality. This muddled complex of beliefs has become one of the most popular pieces of linguistic folklore of modern times. It was Orwell's naive commitment to that folklore which led to his creation of the fictional antilanguage of Newspeak, and hence to his (deserved) canonization as a prophet of twentieth-century culture.

1984 and after: *Changing Images of the Future*, by Nigel Calder (207pp. Century. £9.95. 0 1726 0194 5) takes the form of a dialogue between a certain "A", and O'Brien - not the villain of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but a computer acronymically abbreviated: the Omniscient Being Re-Interpreting Every Nation. A and O'Brien exchange an enormous amount of information about the modern world, and Calder shifts towards the conclusion that our civilization is at breaking point: "only with uncommon shrewdness and good luck will we survive the next 20 years with life and liberty intact".

Treatments and inventions

Avril Bruten

RUSSELL A. PECK
Chaucer's Lyrics and Anecdotes and Arcite:
An Annotated Bibliography 1900-1980
226pp. University of Toronto Press.
0802024815
BORIS FORD (Editor)
The New Pelican Guide to English Literature
Volume I, Part II: Medieval Literature, The
European Inheritance
With an anthology of medieval literature in the
vernacular
623pp. Penguin. £2.95.
0140222723
BERNARD O'DONOGHUE (Editor)
The Courtly Love Tradition
314pp. Manchester University Press. £13.50
(paperback, £4.95).
0719008875
PIERO BOITANI (Editor)
Chaucer and the Italian Trecento
313pp. Cambridge University Press. £29.50.
0521239982
DEREK TRAVERSI
The Literary Imagination: Studies in Dante,
Chaucer, and Shakespeare
266pp. Associated University Presses. £16.
0874131987
The Canterbury Tales: A Reading
251pp. Bodley Head. £11.95 (paperback,
£6.50).
0370305469
DAVID QUINT
Origins and Originality in Renaissance
Literature: Versions of the Source
263pp. Yale University Press. £12.
0300028946

James Russell Lowell wondered in 1870: "Will it do to say anything more about Chaucer?" Whether or not it will do, it has of course been done. Russell A. Peck's annotated bibliography, *Chaucer's Lyrics and Anecdotes and Arcite, 1900-1980*, is one of those immensely useful aids to scholarship which (to adapt Lowell) on *The Faerie Queene* offers fine food with unfortunate bits of grit in it since all critical contributions, original, derivative, trivial or just "chaff", "must be taken into account" as all have become part of "the living record of Chaucer scholarship". Certainly, the best of that record affirmatively answers Lowell's other question: "Can anyone say anything, not new, but even fresh, on a topic so well worn?" Not least, but not alone, among the best are the critical approaches that study "the rhetoric, style, and fictive techniques of the witty and ironic Chaucer" hardly envisaged when Lowell's questions were put.

However, these present books are not only about Chaucer, though some are on "topics well worn". If they are "new" and "fresh", and they often are, it is when they constitute a kind of rhetorical *chris*, a coherent refinement of theme through variety of handling, properly demanding what the arts of composition call an interaction between *inventio* and *tractatio*—indeed, the very interaction which many of the present critics seek to show at its most effective in the authors they investigate and assess.

In the first three books under review, the theme of the critical *chris*, to be sure, virtually boundless, being that of the relationships among English and European writers and their treatment of each other and of common themes and forms. The emphasis is on context. The critical approach is far removed from what O. S. Lewis called "the LCM approach", for example "the older modern reading of Dante, with its disproportionate emphasis on the *Inferno*, and, within the *Inferno*, on the episode of Paolo and Francesca". The LCM idea is that "an engine is most truly an engine if it is neither driven by steam nor gas nor electricity, neither stationary nor locomotive, neither big nor small". The essayists in *The New Pelican Guide*, in *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, and editor Bernard O'Donoghue in *The Courtly Love Tradition*, believe in Lewis's reformed view: "Instead of stripping the knight of his armour you must try to put his armour on yourself." This demands knowing what goes where; how the nuts and bolts fit; knowing what *engine* meant to Chaucer, what *ingegno* meant to Dante (of which more later); knowing the state of learning, the contents of libraries, the scene of travel, the ways of Chaucer and

State administration (see Janet Coleman, "English Culture in the Fourteenth Century" and John Lerner, "Chaucer's Italy", in *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*).

The *New Pelican Guide* is to be recommended as a rich repository of nuts and bolts, complementary to Volume I, Part I: *Medieval Literature: Chaucer and the Alliterative Tradition*. The contributors, all informative and readable, address themselves to both the "committed student of literature" and (in a more missionary, but not at all patronizing, spirit) "those many readers" who respect literature but, with dry memories of set texts and school prizes, may be hard put to it to sort out Pope, Boccaccio, George Eliot, Beowulf, Yeats, Chrétien de Troyes, Dr Johnson, and many more. (Surely even the committed student of literature will often find lies here.) The volume includes a substantial, well-chosen anthology in translation, with samples of the original text, of extracts ranging from *Beowulf* (including Scyld's arrival and departure, and the fight with Grendel's mother) through Chrétien, the Troubadours, Minnesang, Guillaume de Lorris, Dante, Petrarch, to Rabelais.

One of the hinges that helps fit the armour of medieval writers on to modern frames is the "theme of Courtly Love". The *New Pelican Guide* makes something quite useful of this (see Tony Hunt on Chrétien's *Yvain*, Peter Johnson on Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*) but the reader is properly urged towards Roger Boase and Peter Dronge. Now, too, he may be happily set on to Bernard O'Donoghue's *The Courtly Love Tradition*, a volume in a series ("Literature in context") with eminently sensible aims. It recognizes that "in the end the context of any work is infinite and unknowable", but suggests we approach the problem "more simply-mindedly", then we can say that a work's context is definable by the ideas— theological, philosophical, political, and so on—current when it was written, "and by the literary forms and genres that a period fosters and prefers".

O'Donoghue's book is bound to be much welcomed as a most useful and truly interesting short critical anthology of extracts (with facing translations) from texts of the great period of courtly love writing, mostly from between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries. There are representative selections from Latin literature, including Andreas Capellanus; poetry outside the main European tradition (Georgian, Arabic); the Troubadours; the Minnesingers; the Sühnövisten. Each section has a critical introduction, pithy and lucid, designed (as the whole book is) to "enable readers to assess the conventionalism, originality or deliberateness in the use of courtly love elements by English writers". There is a fair bibliography and a glossary of terms.

O'Donoghue, discussing the use of the term "courtly love", admires the spirit of "Drönke's flourish", that now famous statement in his *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric* (1963): "it is a garden in which roots can seldom be disentangled, and in which it is far more important to watch the growth of the flowers". Well; but sometimes in terminological garden roots surface and trip up a person, thus hindering flower-watching. To help avoid the accident, critics often set out putting in context single words or phrases that might be misunderstood. This is an aspect of criticism that interests Professor Piero Boitani in his fascinating essay "What Dante Meant to Chaucer", in *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*.

The thrust of the essay is to show that "Chaucer works a continuous counterpoint to Dante's text, first drawing close to him and then distancing himself so that Dantean echoes are only half-heard". T. S. Eliot, Boitani notes, points out the three lessons which as a poet "one learns, and goes on learning" from Dante: "the lessons of craft, of speech and of exploration of sensibility". What lessons did Chaucer learn, and how did he beg his own relationship to Dante as a poet? Patrick Boyde, in *Dante's Philomythics and Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1981), in calling the poet "philomythos", alludes specifically to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and argues that the lover of myth is a lover of true knowledge and comprehends a detailed understanding of the place of Man in the Cosmos. Chaucer, "counterpointing" (in

Boitani's word) the high seriousness of the poet as philomythos. In *The House of Fame*, where there is, compared to *The Book of the Duchess*, "a widening of the scope of poetry", Boitani notes several Dantean echoes which indicate that Chaucer "recognizes full well his limitations as a poet because he has grasped what Dante is doing with his poetry and his 'art poetical'". Echoing *Inferno*, II, Chaucer invokes his "Thought", along with Apollo, and asks the "devyne vertu" to help him show what is "marked in his head"—but only "to describe" the House of Fame, not Heaven, nor Hell. The invocations seem to say something about Chaucer's conception of the poetic process; Boitani compares them with Dante's (*Inf* II, 7-9; *Purg* I, 1-12; *Par* I, 10-33 and II, 8-9). In these invocations are prominent the terms *ingegno* and *mente*. This is, of course, in Lowell's words, a well-worn topic. However, Boitani turns the argument thus: Chaucer, in translating *mente* ("memory") as "Thought", and in making *ingegno* ("inventiveness") part of it, introduces some confusion. Chaucer knew that "engyn" could not be a part of memory. Either Chaucer was not aware of "the distinction between memory, 'engyn' and intellect, or else 'Thought' must be understood not only as 'power to remember' but as 'mental power', 'mind'—a more comprehensive concept of which 'engyn' could be a part".

Yet it is not at all clear that there was so sharp a separation for Chaucer between "memory" and "engyn". Rhetorical theory sets out that memory is of two kinds (eg, *Rhet. ad Herennium*, III. xvi: "aut ingitur duae memoriae: una naturalis, altera artificiosa"). The *thesaurus* of ideas supplied by invention is supplied to memory, "the custodian of all the parts of rhetoric" (*ibid*, and cf III. xx). So it is not clear that Boitani derives the correct emphasis when he argues that Chaucer underlines "thought" rather than "remembrance" in poetic activity. It is interesting, then, to read Boitani's other essay in the volume he edits, "Style, Imaginology, and Narrative: the Lesson of the Teseida", based substantially on his *Chaucer and Boccaccio* (Oxford, 1977) and making keen critical use of R. A. Pratt's "Chaucer's Use of the Teseida" (*PMLA*, LXII, 1947). For, subtly comparing and contrasting Boccaccio's work with *The Knight's Tale*, Boitani shows that Chaucer's characteristic imagery, based on *consuetudo* rather than *audacia*, manifests precisely that concreteness, immediacy, that *evidentia*, which proceeds from the founding, arrangement and conflation of "backgrounds", discussed in rhetorical treatments of inventive memory.

Moving among other roots and flowers in *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, most illuminating and lucid are Peter Godman's discussion in "Chaucer and Boccaccio's Latin Works" and Robin Kirkpatrick's two essays, "The Wake of the Commedia: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*" and "The Griselda Story in Boccaccio Petrarch and Chaucer", which have the fine edge seen before in his *Dante's Paradiso and the Limitations of Modern Criticism*. J. A. W. Bennett's incisive, elegant contribution is also memorable.

Derek Traversi's *The Canterbury Tales: A Reading* is not so much like the Clerk of Oxenford's speech as reminiscent at times of the Wife of Bath's monologue. It is very odd that the reader, too, has to tumble so as to find "an inseparable part of my thesis", "insights essential to the argument". In a wholly other book, Traversi's *The Literary Imagination: Studies in Dante, Chaucer, and Shakespeare*. If one does pursue *The Franklin's Tale* and *The Manciple's Tale* to this volume, they are to be found in company with two new essays on Dante and three Shakespearean studies that "expand and reconsider" ideas found in the author's *Approach to Shakespeare* (1938). It may be that Mr Traversi sits in his study, upon his material, but his own uneasiness about the way in which this material is offered for sale is very clear in the "Author's Note" in each volume. It is his hope that there is enough of the new in his Shakespeare essays on *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *The Tempest* "to justify their publication at this time". I really doubt there is, and am, indeed, like the weather, most unquietly "by the putting forth of these two books in this way".

In the *Reading*, a strict "marriage debate" in *The Canterbury Tales* is denied; marriage is "part of a larger order of reality", yet Part II of the book discusses the tales of the Wife of Bath, the Clerk and the Merchant under the heading "Marriage and 'Matriarchy'", with frequent reference to issues raised by the proposal of a debate, and this section ends abruptly, almost literally up a tree, leaving us to return to *The Literary Imagination* for the Franklin's contribution. The Squire is seemingly off on a pilgrimage apart with several fellow travellers, for he does not appear. It is one thing that Chaucer "did not complete his design", but quite another that Traversi's exposition is "in certain respects incomplete", especially where his "plan" includes sections on "The Order of Pilgrimage", "The 'Frame' of the Tales".

Isocrates warned that, while the works of the past are a heritage common to us all, "the ability to make full use of them, in each instance to form the right conceptions about them, and to set them forth in a finished style, is the special gift of them that know". It is just that this is not really to do with Traversi's disclaimers that they are "not the work of a professional 'medievalist'". Indeed, there are several attractions in his "appreciation" of his subject, but this "exercise in literary criticism" remains bitty and too often bland. There is, of course, no doubting Traversi's admiration for and sympathy with Chaucer's "humane and highly civilized intelligence", and many will prefer his approach to entanglement with rhetorical terminology.

"Humane", as the word is used in criticism, is probably not the term that springs to mind when opening David Quint's *Origins and Originality in Renaissance Literature*. This is a survey of the classical, biblical, and patristic traditions that surround the Renaissance treatment of the "source topos". Traversi notes that in *The Tempest* "the sea is associated with the largest forces of life". Quint asserts rather that the source topos "which posits an original unity underlying multiplicity can be read as the emblem par excellence of the tendency of a bookish culture to impose on experienced the closed form and internal coherence of a book". In fact, Quint is not talking about Prospero's rule; he mentions Shakespeare nowhere; his authors are Tasso, Sannazaro, Bruno, Rabelais, Ronsard, Spenser and Milton. Yet, though frequently harsh in style, this book line and again prompts thought beyond the studied texts by its steady demonstration of how the Renaissance text became an instrument of epistemological criticism.

Control to the argument is the claim that literature gradually moves from allegorical sanctuaries to assert "an independent cultural identity of its own". Dante's allegory constitutes "a typology which rests ultimately upon the absolutely anterior significance of the incarnation", but in 1516, Aristotle is affirming the "autonomy of his poetic fiction in *de Orlando Furioso*". This is as much as to say that, the concept of anteriority once collapsed, the poet's images demand and may be allowed the heart of the Renaissance debate (*Quint* would say especially among Ramists) about the relative validity of the esoteric and exoteric methods of didacticism. We may see Spenser, in the *Latter to Raleigh*, contributing to the question with his preference for "emblems" over "rules". Some readers infer from the poet's uneasiness with allegory and are drawn to read his fiction as if it were possible to do so without the presumption of anteriority. However, as Holobach has noted, following the rhetoricians, we cannot deny at least "an order of intelligibility" (*dispositio*) which lies behind the poem's images. But, in Quint's view, this must also distinguish Spenser's fiction which "locates allegorical meaning in particular historical circumstances" from the allegory of Bruno's *Errore Furor*, which is "a kind of philosophical goals from which the dimension of history has been removed".

Such matters fill Quint's book, raised to deep and wide consideration of important texts. The conclusion is this: for Renaissance poets, "Originality had become the voice of authority." We have come a long way from Lolius. Or have we?

Civilization's missionaries

Maurice Larkin

ROBERT GILDEA
Education in Provincial France 1800-1914: A
Study of three departments
406pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £28.
0198219415

As all reformers know, a wide gulf divides government legislation from its fulfilment in the country at large. Robert Gildea has set himself the commendable task of comparing the educational measures of successive French governments with the fortunes they encountered in three widely differing regions during the nineteenth century. His concern is with the "tensions . . . between official policies which could change with kaleidoscopic rapidity, sensitive to every shift in political power, and the slower, more measured rhythm of the departments, which could accept, transform, or openly resist such initiatives from the centre". His doctoral research on Brittany led him to choose the department of Ille-et-Vilaine as a suitable example of an underdeveloped pastoral area, where the struggles of royalists and republicans had traditionally played a large part in politics, and where the Church was deeply entrenched in local life. By contrast the department of the Nord was increasingly industrial, but the strong Catholic traditions of Flanders gave the Church an extensive following in both the work-force and the *patronat*. His third choice, the Gard, exemplified the agricultural economy of the far south, with the complicating dimension of a large Protestant minority.

The threefold nature of the book's regional concerns finds a counterpart in the author's concentration on three broad themes. The first is that of "education . . . as an instrument of political colonization whereby the provinces were brought into line with successive regimes in Paris". The struggle was particularly hard in Ille-et-Vilaine where state primary teachers were reprimanded in 1848 that "you are exercising in your commune a sort of priesthood on behalf of civilization". Forty years later the animosities surrounding this *mission civilisatrice* were if anything worse, prompting the *procureur général* of Rennes to report somewhat starkly that they were dealing with "simple, credulous, fanatical masses, cowed under the yoke for centuries, coarse and brutal in their habits, addicted to mysticism, enamoured of the supernatural, a prey to the basest superstitions and addicted to alcohol".

A major problem for the government was the intermittent campaign of the Church to colonize the state education-system in the first half of the century—which, when checked in the post-1860 period, gave way to a Church policy of further expanding its parallel structure of Catholic private schools. The Bishop of Mance warned mothers of the Gard against exposing their daughters to state extra-mural teachers who were "rationalists, pantheists, Protestants, Jews and goodness knows what else—who would turn them into 'aspirants forts and free thinkers'". Dr Gildea is none the less impressed by the quality of the Catholic private sector, which he describes as "superior to the public system in several respects. He claims that its greater flexibility enabled it to respond more easily to the social and professional aspirations of the clientele, while the extra-mural activities it offered in the Nord were apparently much more popular than its state rivals. It is arguable that he presents too sharp a contrast between the "little republican notables, self-righteous and philistine" and "the Catholic clergyman . . . adept, boyish, with a twinkle in his eye" and he is likewise too dismissive of the republican authorities' "obsession" with alcoholism and tuberculosis, which were real enough perils, if imperfectly understood.

The second theme of the book concerns the social aims and consequences of the government's education system and the degree to which they created or restricted mobility between classes—while the third examines the acquired history of the various attempts to provide a technical education that would enable France to compete effectively in the international economy. The comparisons made between the Catholic private sector are more favourable to the Church than many readers might

expect—especially in the Nord where these private institutions enjoyed the support of rich industrialists and a large church-going public.

In both systems the gnawing fear of social unrest makes depressing reading, especially during the Second Republic. The state primary-school teacher had supposedly to be protected against the perils of over-education in the training colleges—otherwise, as a government inspector-general remarked, "How . . . could we prevent that ill-digested encyclopedia from troubling his head and giving him ideas above the humble situation we have assigned to him?"

It is hard to summarize the findings of a book which largely consists of regional qualifications to national *idées reçues*. Its prime warning is against being mesmerized by the great legislative landmarks of educational history. A case in point is the institution of free, obligatory primary education in 1881-82, on which the author comments that "the growth of the school population, relative to the growth of the population as a whole, was no greater during the years after 1881 than during the years 1861-72, dominated by the Liberal Empire, when gigantic strides were made on many fronts in the propagation of education". Moreover the committees responsible for enforcing the law of 1882 often included employers who wanted cheap child labour and were consequently lax in their vigilance.

The main flaw in this informative and perceptive book is that the author has attempted to present more than he has had the time to assimilate and put into satisfactory shape. It may seem ungrateful to suggest that he might have been better advised to confine his investigations to the first or preferably the second half of the century—or alternatively to have delayed publication of such a wide-ranging book until he could complete and digest a more comprehensive survey of education in these departments. Despite the plethora of examples Gildea gives to illustrate the trends he discerns, the reader periodically feels the lack of a firm quantitative assessment of the overall educational situation in each of the three regions. It must also be confessed that his accumulation of illustrative but incomplete data, when multiplied by three themes and three departments, puts something of a strain on one's powers of comfortable assimilation. Admittedly Gildea attempts to provide a *digest* by varying the structure of each section, but these structural changes tend to accentuate the uneven dimensions of the book's constituent parts. Even so, it remains a highly instructive piece of work, and there will be many readers who prefer to have it available now rather than wait until the author could present it in a more finished form.

Conjugally complementary

Gordon Wright

MARTINE SEGALAN
Love and Power in the Peasant Family: Rural
France in the Nineteenth Century
Translated by Sarah Matthews
266pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £16.50.
0631126260

If Martine Segalan is right in her analysis of family relationships in nineteenth-century rural France, a number of widely held beliefs will have to be abandoned. Peasant women, she contends, were not dominated or oppressed by their husbands; they were not confined to subservient non-productive tasks, but were full partners in a cooperative enterprise. Beyond that of the male group, but not subordinate to it, was the family, society likewise was not male-dominated. The female community had its own organization, its own role, alongside that of the male group, but not subordinate to it. Mme Segalan's central hypothesis, she de- clares, is the complementarity of man and wife in traditional French peasant society.

Mme Segalan's principal targets (together with nineteenth-century folklorists) are the more recent historians of the family who have, in her view, uncritically accepted the folklorists' version of things. She accuses the folklorists of an obsessive attempt to apply their own "dominant bourgeois ideology" to the peasant culture they were observing, so that they re-

mained blind to the healthy realities of that culture. They also relied heavily on peasant proverbs, but misinterpreted the sense of those repositories of peasant wisdom by assuming that they reflected the reality of rural life. Instead, she contends, proverbs embodied a set of norms that rarely coincided with reality.

She buttresses her argument by drawing on a wide variety of evidence: the work of anthropologists, demographers, and social historians; a massive survey of rural architecture that broadens out to include living arrangements and work roles within the family; literary and artistic sources (notably Gillemin's *La vie d'un simple* and Millet's paintings); and those "inescapable peasant proverbs" which she accepts as being "the only exhaustive corpus of evidence". Her broad command of these disparate and somewhat slippery sources lends authority to her argument, and strengthens her secondary theme that rural conditions in nineteenth-century France varied too widely to permit easy generalizations about peasant life.

She has interesting things to say on many topics: courtship practices, wedding rituals, village social controls, the division of tasks and of living space, the pervasive evidence, that while masculine qualities were rarely questioned, the predominant image of women was ambivalent, double-edged, suggesting a danger to the male community. She flatly rejects the idea that when peasant women stood behind and served their men at meals rather than

Richard Bonney

SARAH HANLEY
The Lit de Justice at the Klogs of France:
Constitutional Ideology in Legend, Ritual, and
Discourse
389pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£38.70.
0691053820

The *lit de justice* held in the Parlement of Paris by the French king appears in the textbooks as a special assembly for political purposes, in the words of an eighteenth-century theorist, "a solemn session . . . which is convoked to deliberate on important affairs of state". In most accounts we are told that the French kings held such sessions to deal with opposition, particularly in the form of remonstrances. The procedure of the *lit de justice* is thus depicted as an "absolutist" link between the reigns of Francis I and Louis XIV. One of the not inconsiderable merits of Sarah Hanley's study is to show that the apparent link between reigns provided by the *lit de justice* is no link at all, since the term had different meanings and the assembly was used for a variety of purposes between 1527 and 1673. It was not necessarily or even primarily an instrument of royal authority to deal with opposition in the *Parlement*. "When applied without discrimination to Francis I, Henri IV [and] Louis XIV", Hanley writes, the term absolutism "becomes nothing more than an empty synonym for monarchy".

After the posthumous publication of Jean du Tillet's *Recueil des roys de France* (1580), it first appeared under a different title in 1577), a considerable historical mythology evolved in the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries about the origins of the *lit de justice*, suggesting that it had been a constitutional forum in the Middle Ages. Hanley shows that this was far from the case. In 1318 and 1345 there were instances of the term *lit de justice* in the sense of a bench-like seat with canopy and backdrop ("drapery apparatus" in the author's inelegant phrase). There were specific instances between 1388 and 1413 of decorative draperies being used and then removed after royal visits to the *Parlement*. It was even asid in 1413 that the king "held his *lit de justice*" but this seems an aberration, "a new vocabulary of short duration". Between 1413 and 1484 the French kings did not visit the *Parlement*, and thus the term was not used. But when they did, on thirteen occasions between 1484 and 1515 and five further occasions in the early years of Francis I's reign, it was all not used. The first two *lits de justice*, held by Francis I in July and

December 1527, thus stand out as an innovation, the product of a domestic crisis (the rebellion of the Constable of Bourbon) and a foreign war (the king's repudiation of the treaty signed while in captivity at Madrid). There was a third *lit de justice* in the reign, held in 1537 to declare Francis's principal enemy, the Emperor Charles V, guilty of "notorious felony" and to secure the reversion of his fiefs to the crown of France.

The next assembly of this kind was not held until 1563 and took place at the *Parlement* of Rouen; there were also *lits de justice* at Bordeaux (1564) and Toulouse (1565), but only two more meetings at Paris in the sixteenth century. In contrast, Louis XIII held twenty royal sessions in the *Parlement* (all but three at Paris), all termed *lits de justice*. Louis XIV held nineteen in his much longer reign, of which all were before 1673; five were during his minority and raised constitutional issues during the Fronde. Hanley lists ninety-four royal visits to the *Parlement* between 1315 and 1713, but only forty-seven qualify for her designation of *lit de justice*. Clearly, if she is right, the procedure was not as important as the textbooks suggest.

The significance of these forty-seven meetings does not emerge altogether clearly, partly because the amount of evidence about them varies greatly, partly because they differed so much in character. Some merely receive a reference, such as those of November and December 1652; others (the meetings of 1537 1563 and 1610) attain the status of a full chapter. Confusingly, there is a chapter on the coronation *entrée* at Rheims in 1610, thus heightening the impression that the book is an overblown set of articles. Most of Louis XIII's *lits de justice* were designed to secure the registration of fiscal edicts against the opposition of the *Parlement* of Paris; they at least appear to fit the description of the textbooks. They were a world apart from what Hanley calls the "inaugural assemblies" of 1610 and 1643. On the first occasion it was without precedent to declare Louis XIII king in a public forum before his coronation or the funeral of his predecessor. The *lit de justice* of October 1652 is seen as particularly important because it was held at the Louvre, thus humiliating the *Parlement* at the end of the Fronde.

The author is particularly interested in the language of kingship and the significance of ritual, and the subtle evolution of ideas in the speeches is well conveyed. Ritual is more difficult to present. Sixteen illustrations are produced to Princeton's usual high standard, but at nearly £40 the price of iconography is high, especially when the illustrations do not always substantiate the documentary evidence.

joining them, female inferiority was thereby implied; in fact, she says, the custom was natural and practical. Likewise, she defends the communal sleeping arrangements of the time; the practice led to neither promiscuity nor embarrassment, since married couples felt no need for privacy. Indeed, she contends that "the notion of the couple has no great meaning in the nineteenth century rural family".

Some of Mme Segalan's most surprising assertions come in a brief final chapter that deals with the changes produced by the technological advances of the past generation. The effect, she believes, has not been to free women from the discomforts and subjections of the nineteenth century, but to strip them of their traditionally productive role, to transfer absolute control of the farm to the husband, and to destroy "a whole sector of traditional female sociability", as communal activities such as the washhouse and the bakehouse withered away. Indeed, modernization has even increased the housewife's burdens. The traditional rural household, she concludes, provides us with "a model of the family combining the work aspirations of men and women with the desire for individual fulfilment within the conjugal unit, such as present-day society is seeking". Should we, then, see Mme Segalan's treatise as inspired by a nostalgic conservatism, a bit redolent of Vichy, or as a surviving vestige of the cultural revolution of the 1960s, with its anti-technological message?

From the First World to the Third

Michael Crowder

BEN WHITAKER
A Bridge of People: A Personal View of
Oxfam's First Forty Years
224pp. Heinemann. Paperback, £4.95.
0434 862754

The tale Ben Whitaker has to tell of the forty-year-long struggle by Oxfam to use the profits from its shops and the proceeds from its fund-raising campaigns to assuage hunger and cure disease among the poor is a heroic one. Founded in 1942 as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief in response to reports of starvation in Greece and other areas of Nazi-occupied Europe (resulting in part from the Allied blockade), it has grown today into an organization whose activities are spread world-wide and which has an annual income of over £16 million.

But then, as now, Oxfam was merely scratching the surface of a problem that could only be solved with an income many thousand times as great, and by a redistribution of resources on the scale of the Marshall Plan that salvaged Europe from a plight no worse than many a Third World country faces.

Does Oxfam thus really matter in the context of the appalling suffering that is the lot of over a quarter of the world's population? This suffering Whitaker documents not just by shocking statistics but by bringing home to readers in the comfort of their armchairs, as Oxfam itself so skilfully does through its adver-

tisements, the realities of life for the Bengali farmer labouring on less than 1,300 calories a day. To the question whether Oxfam only chips at the surface of the problem, since it has been able to spend a mere £100 million since its foundation (that is, less than the cost of some strategic bombers), Whitaker's response, through a cool and sympathetic analysis of Oxfam's work in such varied lands as Peru, Haiti and Zimbabwe, is a resounding No. To make the point that a charity with an income less than that of the Seychelles can indeed make an impact on a global problem, he begins with an examination of Oxfam's work in Cambodia in the wake of the overthrow of Pol Pot's régime. Not only did Oxfam bring some succour to the victims of that ghastly genocidal government, which for political reasons continued to be recognized by Britain and other Western powers, but also for the first time it was able to show that a non-governmental agency "by incisiveness and conviction... could operate where huge government and international bodies were stymied and politically hamstrung".

Another distinctive feature of Oxfam's approach, as compared with many government aid-giving agencies, is its philosophy that it is no good giving a man a fish that will feed him for a day: what is needed is to teach him to fish and then he will be fed for a lifetime—provided of course there are water and fish within reach. As a result of his close examination of Oxfam projects on the spot, Whitaker is convinced that, at least on a small scale, it is possible to help the poor and needy to stand on their own

feet, despite the failure of so many "official" aid projects. Again, Oxfam follows a policy, all too often absent from "official" schemes, of finding out what the people to be aided need and think they can do, working out solutions with them, not for them.

In this respect Oxfam keeps bureaucratic costs to a minimum and pays its officials modestly, so that most of the "voluntary" aid given by the taxpayers of the rich world reaches those for whom it was destined. It is sad not to be able to say the same about the "involuntary" aid given by taxpayers through the Overseas Development Administration and USAID, whose employees so often live infinitely better overseas than ever they would at home.

There is no doubt that Oxfam and similar non-governmental organizations serve as examples from which government aid agencies would do well to learn. But can Oxfam assume a greater role than this? In 1969-70 this question became a matter of passionate debate in Oxfam when the Reverend Nicolas Stacey, its then Deputy Director, argued that Oxfam should become primarily an educational and lobbying body. If what was needed was a mas-

sive transfer of resources from the First to the Third World in order to reduce global hunger and poverty, and given that there were no votes as yet in aid, then the electorate had to be educated and the politicians persuaded. If today the Dutch can spend 1.08 per cent of GNP and yet Britain only 0.43 per cent and the US a mere 0.2 per cent surely Stacey was right? But he lost out, in part because of the state of the British Charity Law—Amnesty International is denied charitable status, but rifle clubs in Northern Ireland have it—and in part because Oxfam derives much of its income from people "who would cease supporting it if it didn't continue with its work of putting points on foreign babies".

Today, aid, whether charitable or governmental, is increasingly subject to criticism. People in the First World need to be taught that their lives are inextricably intertwined with those of the Third World poor and that it is in their long-term economic interest that the imbalance in wealth between the two be redressed. The tragedy is, as Whitaker points out, that "we have it within our power now to abolish absolute poverty on earth today" and "at the cost of so little sacrifice".

Abuses of dependency

T. D. Campbell

M. D. A. FREEMAN
The Rights and the Wrongs of Children
295pp. Frances Pinter. £17.50 (paperback, £6.95).
0903804 204

M. D. A. Freeman is an academic lawyer whose long-standing interest in the impact of law on children is informed by a wide knowledge of the historical, philosophical, sociological and psychological literature on children's problems. He obviously has also a strong but unsentimental feeling for the sufferings of children and an appropriate sense of outrage at the injustices inflicted on them as a result of adult-oriented social attitudes. In *The Rights and the Wrongs of Children* Freeman succeeds in being both informative about the way in which the law and social services treat children and constructively critical as to how improvement might be made in dealing with what he admits are often intractable problems unsuited to purely legal solutions. Children are people with distinct interests and outlooks on which can be founded a conception of their rights often in contradistinction to those of their parents; but they cannot simply be abandoned to their rights, since they have special needs for care and education, and an ineliminable dependency on the adult world. Freeman shows that these special needs are often used as a cloak for treating children as chattels, but he does not pretend that any charter of children's rights can in itself do much to alleviate the deplorable situations in which those in greatest need often seem to be those least well protected by the law.

The book starts with a historical chapter which brings to our attention cultural variations in the behaviour expected of children and the emergence of the modern conception of "childhood" as a distinct phase of human life in which the innocence and weakness of the young human are thought to require a lengthy period of dependence and education. Freeman then notes the emergence of the demand for children's rights based on the claim that the differences between adults and children have been over-emphasized. Yet children are still in effect often regarded as the property of their parents and; where the law is beginning to weaken this postulate, it is often only to reduce the rights of parents by enlarging those of the state. Children's interests, conceived paternalistically, are now a recognized basis for legal decision-making and social-work practice, but children's "liberation"—that is, the establishment of rights which are based on the distinct personality and autonomy of children—is, as Freeman points out, as yet scarcely more than an idea.

Before going on to treat the legally significant topics of juvenile justice, child abuse and neglect, children in state care, children and divorce, and the legal review of child-rearing practices, Freeman discusses the historical and philosophical background of the law of children. He is not a notably original book, but it is always rigorous in its argumentation and altogether free from deplorable style and pedantry. But it is an intelligent, humane, practically aware and impressively documented treatment of an area in which conceptual confusion, social ignorance and political indifference combine to preserve the great evils that are routinely inflicted on some children and to deny them the legal review of child-rearing

decisions in medicine and education. Freeman bravely attempts to provide a philosophical framework for his material. He draws important distinctions between rights to welfare, rights to protection, rights to equal treatment with adults (social justice), and rights to act independently. To some extent cutting across these distinctions he proposes a principle of "liberal paternalism" which involves asking the question, "What sorts of action or conduct would we wish, as children, to be shielded against on the assumption that we would want to mature to a rationally autonomous adulthood and be capable of deciding on our own system of ends as free and rational beings?"

It cannot be said that the problems of this position are adequately discussed, for great difficulties arise in the search to base decisions on prognostications about how people will feel in the future when this is in part determined by the decisions that have to be made about how they are to be treated now. Nor is the treatment of rights, particularly the latest theory of rights (which deplores the overemphasis on rights in relation to rational capacities), philosophically satisfactory, but the book gains a great deal from being able to draw from the now familiar Rawlsian theory of justice which Freeman espouses. Thus at the very end of the book he is able to use the idea of primary social goods as a base on which to found the possibility of preferring some but not all of children's self-regarding preferences when they clash with their parents' perception of their welfare.

In the more substantive chapters of the book Freeman's professional expertise brings an authority to his overview of the law in relation to children. His account of the neglect of natural justice in the social work and legal processes affecting child "offenders" is effective. His guarded welcome of the current distaste for the punitive effects of so-called "treatment" philosophies is matched by a disavowal for the crudities of the fashionable short-sharp-shock approach. The idea of decriminalizing in relation to "offences" which are peculiar to children (such as truancy) is well argued.

Similar trenchant, well supported and wide-ranging presentation is given to the paradoxical nature of moral crusades against child abuse in a society which authorizes the use of considerable violence by parents and other adults entrusted with the care of children, the ritual lip-service which is given to the interests of children involved in matrimonial breakdown, and the gap between promise and reality in the provisions of institutional care.

This is not a notably original book, but it is always rigorous in its argumentation and altogether free from deplorable style and pedantry. But it is an intelligent, humane, practically aware and impressively documented treatment of an area in which conceptual confusion, social ignorance and political indifference combine to preserve the great evils that are routinely inflicted on some children and to deny them the legal review of child-rearing

For decorative purposes

Charlotte Gere

PETER HINKS
Twentieth Century British Jewellery 1900-1980
122pp, with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Faber. £27.50.
0571 108016

Twentieth Century British Jewellery is the long-awaited successor to Peter Hinks's *Nineteenth Century Jewellery* which appeared under the same imprint in 1975, and in much the same format, devised some years ago for the Faber Collectors Library. The title omits all reference to this series, and a more wholehearted attempt has been made to integrate the black-and-white plates into the text; but those who remember the earlier publications should not be misled by the smart, modern-style book-jacket in shaded tones of silver into thinking that the inside of the book will be radically different from its predecessors.

Hinks has set himself the invidious task of choosing, from a great mass of available material, what seems to him significant in the work of the immediate past and in his own time. It is

never an easy task to evaluate the work of one's contemporaries, and in the case of jewellery it is made even more difficult by the diversity of purposes for which it is intended. The discrepancy in intrinsic value between jewellery made for the adornment of a queen and the meretricious but no less glittering glass ornaments sold at the fairground or in the bazaar, seems to demand a double standard when it comes to judging artistic significance, for this is by no means in direct ratio to the preciousness of the materials employed. Indeed, the most striking experiments with technique, form and colour have almost always, in the modern period, been initiated by artist-jewellers using materials of negligible value. The effective setting of precious stones of great size and purity relies principally on the scientific and mathematical skills of the lapidary—a subject of considerable significance to the development of a twentieth-century style for diamond jewellery which is barely touched upon by the author. This skill has a subtle beauty of its own, but little artistry is required for a setting the chief virtue of which is its unobtrusiveness. Hinks's sympathies seem to lie with the jeweller as an artist rather than as an immaculate technician.

For the first half of his chosen period Hinks, evidently with the collector in mind, concentrates on the wide variety of jewellery produced for the prosperous middle class. This ranges from conventional diamond-set pieces of modest dimensions to the artist-designed jewellery, often of silver and coloured stones of little value, associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, and includes even the "novelties"—diamond dogs with ruby eyes, gold and gem-set airships and the like—the taste for which began in the nineteenth century and continued well into the 1930s. This part of the text is enlivened by the inclusion of well-chosen quotations from the *Illustrated London News* and *Sphere* (but, curiously, not *Queen*, that gold-mine of fashion lore), which reflect

current fashions, at one moment for a revived eighteenth-century style, at another for the influence of the barbaric splendours of the Russian ballet or the polychrome treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Jewellery made before 1940 is now classified, in collecting circles at least, as "period", and that made since as "modern". The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 divides the period covered by this book into exactly equal halves which require somewhat different treatment. Technical innovations in the second half of this century have so transformed the art of jewellery at every level that no account of the period can be complete without a discussion of such exciting new materials as titanium, niobium, acrylic and perspex. The lightweight materials and methods for shaping in a sculptural style have tempted many modern designers towards a kind of unconventional, often large-scale and, for many people, unwearable type of jewellery. It is with this aspect of contemporary jewellery that Hinks most concerns himself but by doing so he has exaggerated the contrast between the pre-war and post-war eras, for he has concentrated on the work of individual artist-craftsmen and designers whose creations are often too out of fashion for popularization, at the expense of general trends in fashion or the effect of social change on the development of the jewellery trade. The reader is thus presented with a picture of the twentieth century as if it was as distant in time as the Renaissance, our view of which is distorted by the accidents of survival which favour the unique or specially commissioned piece.

Hinks has brought together much of interest about this innovative designers and their revolutionary use even of conventional materials, but many readers may find more useful his account of the earlier period, in which the Arts and Crafts designers—who might be seen as the Edwardian parallel to the modern artist-jeweller—are placed in the context of the fashionable jewellery of their time.

Putting in the needle

Stella Mary Newton

CHARLES GERMAIN DE SAINT-AUBIN
The Art of the Embroiderer
Translated by Nikki Schauer
Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with David R. Godine. £22.50.
087923 4866

British publishers will, surely, shed no envious tear when confronted with this edition of Charles Germain de Saint-Aubin's *Art of the Embroiderer*. On fine-quality paper, with margins wide enough to accommodate, where appropriate, relevant details from the original engravings, the book also includes, besides the engravings in full, twenty plates in excellent colour of specimens of late eighteenth-century embroidery in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Charles Germain de Saint-Aubin, Designer to the King, is little known today. His *L'Art du Brodeur*, published in 1764, was a technical manual for the client but at the serious artisan, ambitious enough to wish to become a Master in his craft (women, he makes clear, were mainly employed on the less exacting or more tedious techniques). While he emphasized the importance of basic design, "la base et le fondement de la Broderie", which determined "les formes et le belle distribution", he also stressed the importance of "l'économie des différentes manières d'opposer ou la mélange des différents procédés"; but such generalities soon gave way to instructions on work-room practice, practice still current in the Haute Couture until very recently. From the method of handling sequins to the best way to thread a needle with wool, Saint-Aubin set out all the tricks of the business in good order.

Or, to fairly good order. The editors of this admirable reprint of his book have painstakingly gone through his original text and very unobtrusively corrected his often faulty cross-references to details in his illustrative engravings. But they have done far more. Reproducing his text and engravings in facsimile, but with these corrections discreetly marked, they

have also provided a complete translation of his main text, of his *Explication des Termes*—a lengthy section and most helpful—and of his *Explication des Planches*. The modern colour plates, showing close-up details of surviving embroideries, add clarification both to Saint-Aubin's *Termes* and to his line-engravings.

Far from being a quaint relic, in its present form this book represents an easily accessible and important piece of social history, on which the translator, Nikki Schauer (herself an embroiderer) and the three editors, Professor Alexander Rahn, Edward Maeder and Lynne Dean must be congratulated. Cara has been dependent on the scheme of publication; Maeder has, for instance, explained in his introduction that, "unless otherwise indicated, American, and not British textile terminology has been used in this translation", which sets the British reader's mind at rest at the use of the word "Crest" to stand for "Coat-of-arms". The one other query is the rendering of Saint-Aubin's reference to "fausses Ouvrières", which he says were nicknamed "fags" because, earning less than the Masters, they could afford to drink only water. Here, surely, it is women who are scorned rather than apprentices?

But the true splendour of the book is Saint-Aubin's text and masterly designs for the embroidery destined for the king and his entourage. One of fourteen children of the better known painter and engraver, Gabriel Germain de Saint-Aubin, Charles himself appears in few of his own engravings, but in the *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* of 1864, only as a painter and engraver who composed ornaments and designs for embroidery and received "Le brevet de dessinateur du roi pour le costume moderne". There is no mention of his book, though two collections of his engravings, *Mes petits bouquets* and *Les Fleurettes*, are referred to in this brief entry. It has to be admitted that there is, apparently, no copy of *L'Art du Brodeur* of 1770 in the British Library. As a work not simply on the artistry but on the techniques of the late eighteenth-century embroiderer, it would certainly have found a place there had a copy been available.

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

- Barrow, Andrew. *International Gossip: A history of high society 1970-1980*. The Gossip Family Handbook 7
- Boltani, Piero (Editor). *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento* 20
- Bowen, John. *Squeak: A biography of NPA 1978-2003* 19
- Brown, Tina. *Life as a Party* 7
- Cassio, Hugh. *Hugh Cassio's London* 8
- Cherry, Bridget, and Nikolaus Pevsner. *London 2: South* 8
- Couper, Alastair (Editor). *The Times Atlas of the Oceans* 18
- Cox, Alwyn and Angela. *Rockingham Pottery and Porcelain 1745-1842* 23
- Cross, Stephen. *London's Bridges* 8
- De Fontenay, Ellaabeth. *Diderot: Reason and resonance* 6
- Déon, Michel. *Where are you dying tonight?* 19
- De Saint-Aubin, Charles Germain. *The Art of the Embroiderer* 23
- Fitzmaurice, John. *The Politics of Belgium: Crisis and compromise in a plural society* 11
- Ford, Boris (Editor). *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature Volume I, Part II: Medieval Literature, the European inheritance* 20
- Freeman, M. D. A. *The Rights and the Wrongs of Children* 21
- Gilbert, Robert. *Education in Provincial France 1800-1914: A study of three departments* 21
- Hansley, Sarah. *The Lie of Justice of the Kings of France: Constitutional ideology in legend, ritual and discourse* 21
- Harris, R. W. *Clarendon and the English Revolution* 4
- Hennings, Basil Duke (Editor). *The House of Commons 1660-1690* 3
- Hinks, Peter. *Twentieth Century British Jewellery 1900-1980* 23
- Hood, Christopher C. *The Tools of Government* 11
- Hughes, Judith M. *Emotion and High Politics: Personal relations at the summit in late nineteenth-century Britain and Germany*
- Johnson, Charles. *Oxfordshire Tale* 19
- Jones, Edward, and Christopher Woodward. *A Guide to the Architecture of London* 8
- Korshak, Paul J. *Typologies in England 1650-1820* 10
- Lacey, Robert. *Aristocrats* 7
- Larkin, Philip. *Required Writing: Miscellaneous pieces 1955-1982* 5
- Lindsay, Louis. *Cocktails and Laughter* 7
- McPhee, John. *In Suspect Terrain* 18
- Michaëls-Jean, Ruth. *Heritage of the Kaiser's Children: An autobiography* 9
- Miller, Camille. *Who's Really Who?* 7
- O'Donoghue, Bernard (Editor). *The Courtly Love Tradition* 20
- Paulsø, Ronald. *Book and Painting: Shakespeare, Milton and The Bible* 10
- Peck, Russell A. *Chaucer's Lyrics and Anecdotes and Archaic: An annotated bibliography 1900-1980* 20
- Quint, David. *Origins and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the source* 20
- Reisner, Ron. *The Making of a Continent* 18
- Screesh, M. A. *Montaigne and Melancholy: The wisdom of the essays* 6
- Segalen, Martine. *Love and Power in the Peasants' Family: Rural France to the nineteenth century* 21
- Todd, Olivier. *Une légende gauloise de bois* 11
- Thale, Mary (Editor). *Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society 1792-1799* 4
- Travers, Derek. *The Literary Imagination: Studies in Deane, Chaucer, and Shakespeare. The Canterbury Tales: A reading* 20
- Wakefield, Tom. *Mates* 19
- Weale, Albert. *Political Theory and Social Policy* 22
- Whitaker, Ben. *A Bridge of People: A personal view of Oxfam's first forty years* 22
- Witherington, Donald J. (Editor). *Sheland and the Outside World 1469-1969* 18

In 1968 the Italian series *Fontes Ambrosiani* included a major illustrated survey of the Ambrosiano itself, describing its history, art collections and library. An English translation of the part of that volume relating to the library, Angelo Paredis's *A History of the Ambrosiana* (110pp. University of Notre Dame Press, distributed to the UK by International Book Distributors, £8. 0 268 01078 1) has now been published, slightly extended to take account of the most recent events. It provides a useful and easily accessible introduction to one of the great libraries of the world that has survived its vicissitudes triumphantly since its foundation by Federico Borromeo in the first years of the seventeenth century.